

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

My eyes are always on the Lord,  
for he rescues my feet from the snare.  
Turn to me and have mercy on me,  
for I am alone and poor.

**COLLECT**

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness,  
who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving  
have shown us a remedy for sin,  
look graciously on this confession of our  
lowliness,  
that we, who are bowed down by our  
conscience,  
may always be lifted up by your mercy.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Exodus 3:1-8. 13-15

A reading from the book of Exodus.  
Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro,  
his father-in-law, priest of Midian. He led his  
flock to the far side of the wilderness and  
came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There  
the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the  
shape of a flame of fire, coming from the  
middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was  
the bush blazing but it was not being burnt  
up. "I must go and look at this strange sight,"  
Moses said, "and see why the bush is not  
burnt." Now the Lord saw him go forward to  
look, and God called to him from the middle  
of the bush. "Moses, Moses!" he said. "Here  
I am," he answered. "Come no nearer," he  
said. "Take off your shoes, for the place on  
which you stand is holy ground. I am the  
God of your fathers," he said, "the God of  
Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of  
Jacob." At this Moses covered his face, afraid  
to look at God.

And the Lord said, "I have seen the  
miserable state of my people in Egypt. I  
have heard their appeal to be free of their  
slave-drivers. Yes, I am well aware of their  
sufferings. I mean to deliver them out of the  
hands of the Egyptians and bring them up  
out of that land to a land rich and broad,  
a land where milk and honey flow."

Then Moses said to God, "I am to go, then,  
to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The  
God of your fathers has sent me to you.' But  
if they ask me what his name is, what am I  
to tell them?" And God said to Moses, "I Am  
who I Am. This" he added "is what you must  
say to the sons of Israel: 'The Lord, the God  
of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God  
of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me  
to you.' This is my name for all time; by this  
name I shall be invoked for all generations to  
come."

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Psalm 102

Response:  
The Lord is compassion and love.

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord,  
all my being, bless his holy name.  
My soul give thanks to the Lord  
and never forget all his blessings. (R.)

2. It is he who forgives all your guilt,  
who heals every one of your ills,  
who redeems your life from the grave,  
who crowns you with love and  
compassion. (R.)
3. The Lord does deeds of justice,  
gives judgement for all who are  
oppressed.  
He made known his ways to Moses  
and his deeds to Israel's sons. (R.)
4. The Lord is compassion and love,  
slow to anger and rich in mercy.  
For as the heavens are high above the  
earth  
so strong is his love for those who fear  
him. (R.)

**SECOND READING** 1 Corinthians 10:1-6. 10-12

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the  
Corinthians.

I want to remind you, brothers, how our  
fathers were all guided by a cloud above  
them and how they all passed through the  
sea. They were all baptised into Moses in  
this cloud and in this sea; all ate the same  
spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual  
drink, since they all drank from the spiritual  
rock that followed them as they went, and  
that rock was Christ. In spite of this, most of  
them failed to please God and their corpses  
littered the desert.

These things all happened as warnings for  
us, not to have the wicked lusts for forbidden  
things that they had. You must never  
complain: some of them did, and they were  
killed by the Destroyer.

All this happened to them as a warning,  
and it was written down to be a lesson for us  
who are living at the end of the age. The man  
who thinks he is safe must be careful that he  
does not fall.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**  
Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of  
God!  
Repent, says the Lord,  
for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.  
Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of  
God!

**GOSPEL** Luke 13:1-9

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Luke.

Some people arrived and told Jesus about  
the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled  
with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to  
them, "Do you suppose these Galileans who  
suffered like that were greater sinners than  
any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you.  
No; but unless you repent you will all perish  
as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the  
tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you  
suppose that they were more guilty than all  
the other people living in Jerusalem? They  
were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent  
you will all perish as they did."

He told this parable: "A man had a fig tree  
planted in his vineyard, and he came looking  
for the fruit on it but found none. He said to  
the man who looked after the vineyard, 'Look  
here, for three years now I have been coming  
to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding

none. Cut it down: why should it be taking  
up the ground?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'leave it  
one more year and give me time to dig round  
it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if  
not, then you can cut it down.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial  
offerings,  
and grant that we who beseech pardon for our  
own sins,  
may take care to forgive our neighbour.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

The sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for her young:  
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and  
my God.  
Blessed are they who dwell in your house,  
for ever singing your praise.

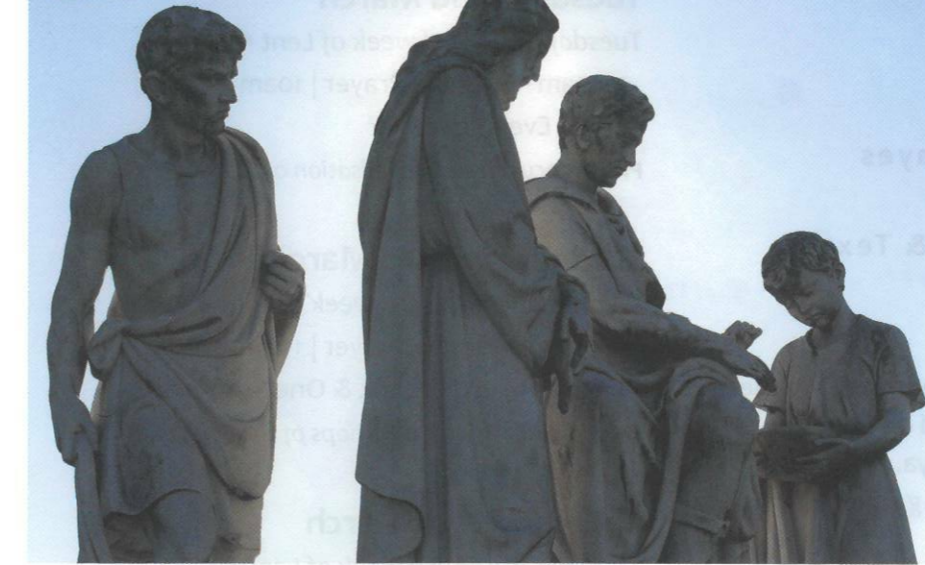
**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

As we receive the pledge  
of things yet hidden in heaven  
and are nourished while still on earth  
with the Bread that comes from on high,  
we humbly entreat you, O Lord,  
that what is being brought about in us in  
mystery  
may come to true completion.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE**

Direct, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your  
faithful,  
and in your kindness grant your servants this  
grace:  
that, abiding in the love of you and their  
neighbour,  
they may fulfil the whole of your commands.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Lent stimulates us to let the Word of God  
penetrate our life and in this way to know the  
fundamental truth: who we are, where we  
come from, where we must go, what path we  
must take in life. *Pope Benedict XVI*

**THE WORD****WHAT DID THEY DO TO DESERVE THAT?**  
(LUKE 13:1-9)

Depiction of Pontius Pilate washing his hands

This is the second time that the name of Pilate has occurred in Luke's narrative. This Roman official had a reputation for ruthlessly dealing with anyone he saw as a troublemaker, so as we are in Lent, and following Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem, we have a hint of what is to come.

The common attitude of the time was that misfortune was the result of sin, which Jesus seems to accept. But his teaching is that the tragic fate of these people of Galilee does not indicate that they were particularly guilty of any offence more serious than anyone else. Nor were those crushed under a toppling building in Jerusalem. Rather, Jesus is emphasising just how precarious human life can be; his listeners should not take life and health for granted, nor put off being converted and living a decent life under the word of God. A sudden death may not be due to divine punishment, but it may happen all the same.

The second section of our Gospel reading concentrates on the fig tree which fails to produce fruit. A fruitful tree is a sign of God's blessing, and we find examples of the fig, the olive, the grape-bearing vine as positive proof of God's care for the people. We note that the person in charge of the garden argues, politely, with the landowner, to give the plant another and final chance. This echoes the message of the first passage, that no one can put off indefinitely the effort to reorder and reorient their lives. ■

**REFLECT**

Recent times have shown us how precarious human life actually is. The forces of nature – wind, storm, flood and fire – have wreaked havoc on our human societies and cities, and on our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. Perhaps it might help our understanding and attitude if we thought of nature as a living force. Then the events which have caused so much suffering to so many people would be not so much due to unpredictable disasters as to human beings upsetting the balance

between ourselves and what we call the "natural world".

If we consider the two examples which Jesus gives in the first part of our Gospel today, we find that the calamities he mentions may well be interpreted, according to the official doctrine of retribution (fidelity is rewarded, disloyalty is punished), as the judgement of God. But if we consider the two cases, we could say that the first is due to the cruel and cynical decision of the Roman governor;

**LEARN**

Pontius Pilate was finally removed from office for cruelty and exiled to Gaul, part of present-day France.

Personal disaster, such as illness, poverty or other misfortune, was often seen in biblical terms as the result of sin in the person's life.

A good harvest of wheat, figs, grapes, olives was seen as a blessing from God; sterility in a woman, lack of fruit in crops was regarded as God's withholding of blessing.

**SAY**

The Lord's is the earth and  
its fullness: the world and  
all its peoples

(Psalm 24:1)

**DO**

When you see reports of the next natural disaster, ask yourself what you can do to address climate change.



the second may well be attributed to shoddy building workmanship.

One of the unfortunate effects of the Jewish and Christian view of what we call "salvation history" has been the separation of God's intervening in history – in the Exodus event, in the person of Jesus – and the world of nature. If we were to see nature as a living force, protesting violently against human abuse of the environment, perhaps we could better respond accordingly. ■