

TAPE Gloria  
(Vindict)

Stay he to the Fr. & to the S. & to the H.S.: as it was in the beginning, so be it now & forever.  
Rom 1<sup>20-25</sup> (Advent: 2 p. Part.)

Strong words and straight speaking from St Paul at the beginning of his letter to the Romans. You will have heard that passage already at Mass yesterday: but as last Friday I didn't comment at all on the scripture readings for yesterday, and this piece of St Paul especially wd. seem to call for comment, I think we could take some minutes today to reflect again on what we listened to yesterday. But first, a few words about the choice of readings for Mass in this period after Pentecost. As you know, in this year's cycle of scripture the gospel being read on Sundays is from St Matthew: and now that the special seasons of Lent and paschaltide are over, we've returned to St Matthew's gospel again.

On each Sunday from now until Advent at the beginning of December, the gospel reading will be taken from St Matthew systematically, progressing from chapter to chapter. It will be seri-continuous only, for there isn't time to read all of every chapter. You will, nevertheless, hear each by week, a substantially consecutive reading of St Matthew's gospel, and wd. fruitfully read on over the omitted portions in your own private prayer & reflection. The same will be true for the other N.T. Sunday readings, except that, again for time reasons, rather more of it will not be read. We started off this week with St Paul's letter to the Romans, and this will be the second of Sunday's 3 readings each week, consecutively again, until the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost when we change to the letter to the Philippians and the 1<sup>st</sup> letter of St Paul to the Thimotheians to bring us up to Advent, when the next cycle of Sunday scripture readings begins. As the

purpose of these arrangements is to introduce you to a closer knowledge and understanding of the Holy scripture, I would suggest that as you're interested enough to listen to these Midday Prayer programmes you might profitably make some study of St Paul's letter to the Romans, and of St Matthew's gospel during these coming weeks when they will both of them be forming the basis of at least one of our ~~next~~ talking points in these Catholic Midday Prayers. In this way you would be achieving one of the aims of the Vatican Council's renewal of the Church's liturgy — your personal prayer being nourished and enriched by the liturgy which, in its turn, would be made more meaningful and effective for you by your coming to take part in it already prepared by prayer. So, as we recite our formal prayer now, let's try to pray in the spirit and atmosphere of our celebration of the liturgy yesterday. PRAYERS

Ego sum Panis  
(R 25)

was the Feast of Corpus Christi — so, for a prayer in music now, listen to a ~~short~~ <sup>rather long</sup> ~~piece~~ <sup>by</sup> Palestrina — "I am the living bread"  
the ~~original~~ ~~text~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Mass~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~day~~,

MUSIC

To get back to St Paul and his letter to Rome. Though he was writing to Jewish converts, the point he was making is a valid one for all of us. In that extract I began with he's talking pretty plainly about the world and the men of his day, the corruption, wickedness, avarice, emptiness of contemporary society. And he puts it all squarely down to the blindness of men, induced or blameworthy, in refusing to recognise and acknowledge God — and this in spite of the evidence from visible creation wd. points towards the creator and Lord of the universe. Perversely, men have



invented their own gross gods, and worship all sorts of created things rather than the Maker of them. The vices and injustices Paul mentions were indeed characteristic of the Roman empire of his day, and especially its capital city. But they're equally to be found today, and in our city too: and as long as mankind goes on ignoring its creator and its purpose they will continue to be found, despite the unceasing of woolly-headed reformers who think that justice, brotherly love, peace and happiness can be brought about by legislation or by declaring that moral evil doesn't exist, either in practice or in theory. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" - what St Paul is pointing out is that it's much worse to fall out of the hands of the living God, and contemporary society was, and is, his proof for that. But this is the society in which a Christian must live and find Christ, and to which he must bring Christ. / But Paul's tirade is not only against the pagan world - he also speaks out, in both anger and sorrow, about the situation of people who received God's own revelation and His law to guide their lives. This hadn't prevented them from not recognising God in their lives and following His ways - it's so easy to take things for granted, to chant mindlessly "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord" and forget about the Lord of the temple. And this is a Christian's perennial temptation and danger too - to know (or think you know) all about Christ, His Church, His love, His redemption, and not to know Christ. We have less excuse for not acknowledging God and His place in our lives and our society than have others who make gods out of money, pretence, ambition because they don't recognise God in creation or in the witness to Him which we should be giving.