

## WEEK 8

### SUNDAY

#### CYCLE 1

#### **First Reading** 1 Cor 14: 20-40

*The use of spiritual gifts in the assembly*

Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; be babes in evil, but in thinking be mature. In the law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." Thus, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers.

If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you. What then, brethren? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God.

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent. For you can all prophecy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached? If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. If any one does not recognize this, he is not

recognized. So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order.

**Responsorial.** *1 Thes. 5: 19-21; 1 Cor. 14: 1*

**R:** Do not put out the Spirit's fire, do not treat prophecies with contempt; \*  
Test everything, hold on to the good.

**V:** Eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

**R:** Test everything, hold on to the good.

**Second Reading.** *Hom. 25: 3 – 4*

*The beneficial rite that we celebrate in our meetings is called Eucharist.*

**A reading from the “Homilies on Matthew” of St. John Chrysostom, bishop.**

Therefore bearing these things in mind, let us also fulfil all our duties to our neighbour, and let us give thanks continually to God. For it is too monstrous, enjoying as we do His bounty in deed every day, not so much as in word to acknowledge the favour; and this, though the acknowledgment again yield all its profit to us. Since He needs not, be sure, anything of ours: but we stand in need of all things from Him. Thus thanksgiving itself adds nothing to Him, but causes us to be nearer to Him. For if men's bounties, when we call them to memory, do the more warm us with their proper love-charm; much more when we are continually bringing to mind the noble acts of our Lord towards us, shall we be more diligent with regard to His commandments.

For this reason Paul also said, “Be thankful.” For the best preservative of any benefit is the remembrance of the benefit, and a continual thanksgiving. For this reason even the awful mysteries, so full of that great salvation, which are celebrated at every communion, are called a sacrifice of thanksgiving, because they are the commemoration of many benefits, and they signify the very sum of God's care for us, and by all means they work upon us to be thankful. For if His being born of a virgin was a great miracle, and the evangelist said in amazement, “now all this was done;” (Mt. 1: 22) His being also slain, tell me, what place shall we find for that? I mean, if to be born is called “all this;” what can to be crucified, and to pour forth His blood, and to give Himself to us for a spiritual feast and banquet be called? Let us therefore give Him thanks continually, and let this precede both our

words and our works. But let us be thankful not for our own blessings alone, but also for those of others; for in this way we shall be able both to destroy our envy, and to rivet our charity, and make it more genuine. Since it will not even be possible for you to go on envying them, on behalf of whom you give thanks to the Lord.

Wherefore, as you know, the priest also enjoins us to give thanks for the world, for the former things, for the things that are now, for what has been done to us before, for what shall befall us hereafter, when that sacrifice is set forth. For this is the thing both to free us from earth, and to remove us into heaven, and to make us angels instead of men. Because they too form a choir, and give thanks to God for His good things bestowed on us, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." (Lk. 2: 14).

"And what is this to us, that are not upon earth, nor are men?" "No, it is very much to us, for we have been taught so to love our fellow servants, as even to account their blessings ours." Wherefore Paul also, everywhere in his epistles, gives thanks for God's gracious acts to the world. Let us too therefore continually give thanks, for our own blessings, and for those of others, alike for the small and for the great.

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 102: 2, 4; Gal. 2: 20*

**R:** Bless the Lord, my soul, \* do not forget his many benefits. He saves your life from the grave, he crowns you with grace and mercy.

**V:** He has loved me and has given himself for me.

**R:** Do not forget his many benefits. He saves your life from the grave, he crowns you with grace and mercy.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *2 Cor. 7:2-16*

*The consolation of Paul because of the repentance of the Corinthians.*

**A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.**

Open your hearts to us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live

together. I have great confidence in you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. With all our affliction, I am overjoyed.

For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest but we were afflicted at every turn -- fighting without and fear within.

But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.

For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it (though I did regret it), for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting; for you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.

For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter. So although I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong, nor on account of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your zeal for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his mind has been set at rest by you all. For if I have expressed to him some pride in you, I was not put to shame; but just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting before Titus has proved true. And his heart goes out all the more to you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, and the fear and trembling with which you received him. I rejoice, because I have perfect confidence in you.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 7: 10, 9*

**R:** Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, \* while worldly grief produces death.

**V:** For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us

**R:** while worldly grief produces death.

**Second Reading.** *Hom. 14:1 – 2*

*Over abundance of joy in all tribulations.*

## **A reading from the “Homilies on the Second Letter to the Corinthians” of St. John Chrysostom, bishop.**

Again Paul begins his discourse with love, restraining the bitterness of reproof. He had reproached them and reproved them on the score that when he loved them they did not return his love, but had broken away from his love and allied themselves to men of evil life. But again he thinks it necessary to soften his reproof and says, ‘Make room for us in your hearts’ (2 Cor. 7: 2), that is ‘Love us’. The favour that he asks is not at all burdensome but one that is actually more advantageous to those who give than to those who receive. Nor does he say, ‘You must love’, but – a word full of compassion – ‘Make room for us in your hearts’. ‘Who now’, he asks, ‘has driven us out of your hearts?’ Who has cast us out? Why do we find your hearts closed to us?’ Now the apostle has said above, ‘It is you who have closed your hearts to us’, (2 Cor. 6: 12) and in this passage he expresses himself more clearly. He declares, ‘Make room for us in your hearts’, and again in this way he draws them to himself. For there is nothing that so draws a man to return love, as when he understands that he who loves him is urgently longing for his affection.

‘As I have said before’, he remarks, ‘you are so dear to us that we are always together, whether we live or die’ (2 Cor. 7: 3). Now the greatest power of love is this, that even when spurned the one who loves is willing to live and die with the beloved. You are not merely in our hearts, but in them in the way I have said. It is possible that a man could love and try to avoid danger, but it is not so with us.

‘I am filled with consolation’ (2 Cor. 7: 4). What consolation? Obviously that which flows from you: because you have changed your ways, you have consoled me by your deeds. It is characteristic of a lover to complain that he is not loved, and then to fear that by going too far in his accusations he may cause sorrow. And so Paul says: ‘I am filled with consolation, I am running over with joy’.

What he means is this: ‘You caused me great sorrow, but you have made it up to me in full and brought me comfort: not only have you dispelled my sorrow, you have made me full of joy’.

Then he shows how great his joy really is. Not only does he say: ‘I am running over with joy’, but he adds, ‘in all our troubles’. So great, he says, was the pleasure which you brought me that it could not be diminished by

all that we are suffering. It has overwhelmed all our troubles so that we cannot feel them for joy.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 12: 12, 15*

**R:** The things that prove I am an apostle were done with all patience among you, \* with signs and wonders and miracles.

**V:** I will be glad to spend all I have, and myself as well, in order to help you,

**R:** with signs and wonders and miracles.

YEAR A

**Gospel.** *Mt. 6: 24 – 34*

**A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew.**

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.

**Third Reading.** *Hom. 62*

*Search first for the kingdom of God and his justice.*

**A reading from the “Commentary on the Gospel of Luke” of St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop.**

What must the disciples learn from these words, or what choice must they make? This without doubt: to place all hope for nourishment in him, reminding themselves of that which the psalm says: “Cast your worries on the Lord and he will support you” (Ps. 54: 23). The Lord in fact lavishes on the saints what is necessary in order to live and he certainly does not lie when he says: “Do not worry about your life, of what you are to eat or drink, and not even for your body, of what you have to wear... Your Father, in fact, knows what you need. Seek first for the kingdom of God and his justice and all these other things will be given to you as well” (Mt. 6: 25, 32-33).

It was truly useful, in fact necessary, that those who are clothed with the dignity of apostles should have a soul which is not at all greedy for riches, and that they should flee from asking for gifts, being satisfied rather with what God sends them, since it is written: “The attachment to money is the root of all evils” (1 Tm. 6: 10).

It was therefore necessary that at all costs they should be careful and be freed from this vice, which is the root and the origin of all evils, putting instead all their commitment in necessary occupations in order not to be subjected to Satan. In this way, freed from every worldly concern, they would be able to despise that which regards the body desiring only that which God wants.

In fact the bravest soldiers, when they go to fight, do not carry with themselves anything other than the weapons necessary for war. So also, those whom the Christ sent to assist the earth and to fight for all those who were in danger “against the dominators of this world of darkness” (Ep. 6: 12), in fact against Satan himself, had to be freed from the worries of this world and from every material concern, so that girded and well provided with the spiritual weapons, they could fight bravely against those who opposed the glory of Christ and who had ruined all that which was on the earth; in fact they had induced its inhabitants to adore the creature instead of the Creator and to offer cult to the material elements.

Therefore the apostles, having put on the helmet of salvation, the armour of justice and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (cfr.

Ep. 6: 14, 17), had to be inflexible with the enemies, capable of not bringing back anything that was stained or guilty, that is not greed for possession or lust of illicit gains, in fact not even the concerns of this kind; things that dissuade the soul from a life that is pleasing to God and do not permit it to lift itself up to him, but rather immerse it in material and earthly thoughts.

**Responsorial.** *Mt. 6: 31, 32-33*

**R:** So do not worry saying: What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear? \* Your heavenly Father knows what you need.

**V:** Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice and all these things will be given to you as well.

**R:** Your heavenly Father knows what you need.

YEAR B

**Gospel.** *Mk. 2: 18 – 22*

**A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark.**

Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. No one sews a piece of un-shrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins."

**Third Reading.** *Book 4, 34, 1. 2. 3*

*Christ with his coming renewed everything.*

**A reading from the treatise "Against the heresies" of St. Irenaeus, bishop.**



Read more attentively the gospel transmitted by the apostles, read with greater attention the prophecies: you will find that in these were predicted every act, every teaching and all the passion of our Lord. If then you start to think: well then, what again did the Lord bring with his coming? Well: he who had been pre-announced, with his coming has renewed everything. Exactly this in fact will be preached, that “a new thing” (Is. 43: 19) will be done in order to renew and to vivify man. Therefore, the birth of the King is pre-announced by these servants sent exactly to prepare those who were to welcome him and to meet him.

Now then, that the King has come and those who are subjected to him are full of the pre-announced joy and have received the freedom that comes from him and participate in his vision, now that they have heard his teachings and enjoyed his gifts, by now no more do they ask those who announce his coming what new thing the King has brought. Needless to say, those who have known him will have no need to ask them this: in fact he has brought himself and the gifts that had been foretold, he has given to men “things on which the angels desire to fix their gaze” (1 Pet. 1: 12).

He coming, has fulfilled every thing; and still today, and to the end of the world, he will bring to perfection in the Church the New Covenant prefigured by the law. How could the prophets foretell the coming of the King and pre-announce the freedom that he would give and all that which the Christ did through word and with the works, and foretell his passion, and preach the new Testament, if they had received – as some say – the prophetic inspiration from another god who had ignored the indescribable Father, his kingdom and his dispositions, fulfilled by the Son of God who has come on the earth in these last times?

All the prophets in fact have announced these same things, but in no one of the ancient fathers was it realized.

If these things had happened to someone who had lived in the preceding ages, certainly those who came after would not have announced them as future. And there is no one of the patriarchs or of the prophets, or of the ancient kings, with regard to whom any of these predictions have been fulfilled in an appropriate or specific form. All prophesied the sufferings of Christ, but they were far away from suffering the same things that were foretold. In no one else were the predictions of the passion of the Lord fulfilled.

The prophets therefore were not referring to anyone else other than the Lord, in whom all the events pre-announced coincided.

**Responsorial.** *Lk. 1: 68, 70; 1 Jn. 4: 12*

**R:** The Lord has visited and redeemed his people, \* as he had promised through the mouth of his holy prophets of long ago.

**V:** He has sent his Son as the victim of expiation for our sins,

**R:** as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets of long ago.

YEAR C

**Gospel.** *Lk. 6: 39 – 45*

**A reading from the Gospel of St. Luke.**

He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

**Third Reading.** *C. 6*

*The disciples are called to become guides and teachers of the whole world.*

**A reading from the "Commentary on the Gospel of Luke" of St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop.**

"The disciple is not greater than the teacher; but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Lk. 6: 40). The disciples were called to become the guides and the teachers of the whole world. It was necessary

therefore that they presented themselves as well prepared in the religious things: expert connoisseurs of the ways of the gospel, exemplary in the exercise of every good work, in order to be able to offer to the disciples a clear and sound doctrine, perfectly in accordance with the truth. Otherwise precisely they who had already been able to contemplate the Truth and who had their souls completely irradiated by the divine light, would have ended up by becoming blind and guides of blind men. In fact he who is enveloped by the darkness of ignorance cannot guide those who find themselves in his same painful condition to the knowledge of the truth. If by chance he were to try, both of them would finish by tumbling into the pit of passions.

To fight then the vice of pride which is so diffused, and in order to dissuade them from claiming to be more honoured than their teachers, he adds: “The disciple is not greater than the teacher”. Even if at times some disciples progress so much as to equal their teachers, even then they should remain within the boundaries of modesty, and be imitators of their teachers. The same thing Paul will say affirming: “Be my imitators, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11: 1).

If the Master does not judge yet, how can you permit yourself to pronounce sentence? He did not come to judge the world, but to show mercy to it, and he repeats also to you: If I do not judge, neither must you who are my disciples do so. It could be that you are guiltier than the one whom you judge. How can you not blush? The Lord expresses this thought with another image: “Why look at the splinter that is in the eye of your brother?” (Lk. 6: 41). With such words he persuades us with greater evidence to refrain from judging the others, in order to examine rather our hearts and exert ourselves to expel from it the passions that trick it, imploring the help of God. It is he who heals the contrite of heart and he frees us from the evils of the soul. If you have failed more, and more seriously than others, how can you reprimand them, forgetting your sins? This command therefore is necessary to all those who want to be good, but in a special way to those who have the mission of teaching others.

If in fact they will be good and diligent, giving with their own conduct an authentic testimony of the evangelical life, then they can reprimand more freely those who refuse to behave in the same way, and to follow the virtuous examples of their masters.

**Responsorial.** 2 Tm. 2: 2; Ps. 77: 5-6

**R:** The things that you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, \* entrust it to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

**V:** The Lord gave a command to our fathers to make it known to their children, that the next generation might know it.

**R:** Entrust it to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

# MONDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 15:1-19*

*The resurrection of Christ and the hope of the faithful.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.**

Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast -- unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. Whether then it was they, or I so we preach and so you believed. Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied.

**Responsorial.** *Rm. 6: 9-10; 4: 25*

**R:** For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; \* But the life he lives, he lives to God.

**V:** He has been put to death for our sins, and he has been raised for our justification;

**R:** But the life he lives, he lives to God.

**Second Reading.** *Book. 5:8*

*What does it mean to rise with Christ.*

**A reading from the “Commentary on the Letter to the Romans” of Origen, presbyter.**

This we obtain from the words of the apostle through a deeper study: as a live man cannot be buried with a dead man, so also no one who is still living in sin can be buried in baptism together with Christ, who has died to sin. Therefore those who prepare themselves for baptism must, first of all, die to sin, in order to be in this way buried with Christ through baptism; in a way that they can also say: “For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body” (2 Cor. 4: 11).

Paul himself demonstrates how to show the life of Jesus Christ in the body when he says: “It is not I who live anymore, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2: 20). It is the same thing that John writes in his letter: “Every spirit that acknowledges that Christ has come in the flesh is from God” (1 Jn. 4: 2). Not anyone who will say these words with the lips and who will make a public profession will give a proof of being moved by the Spirit of God, but the one who has transformed his life in such a way and who has borne such fruits of works, which he is able to show with the sanctity of his actions and with his sentiments that Christ has come in the flesh and that he has died to sin and lives for God. Let us see what he says again: “Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rm.6: 4). If we have been buried with Christ because already dead to sin, as a consequence, as Christ rose from the dead, we also will rise with him; and as Christ sits at the right hand of the Father, so also we know that we also will sit with him in the heavenly kingdom; the Apostle in fact says: “And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (Ep. 2: 6). Christ has been resurrected for the glory

of the Father: we also, dead to sin and buried with Christ, when all those who see our good works glorify our Father who is in heaven, will truly be able to say that we have been resurrected with Christ for the glory of the Father and that we are walking in a new life.

We walk in a new life, offering ourselves to him who has resurrected us with Christ, every day renewed, made always more beautiful, concentrating in Christ the light of our face, as in a mirror. So, contemplating the glory of the Lord, we transform ourselves in his image, as Christ, rising from the dead, ascended from the humble earthly baseness to the glorious majesty of the Father.

**Responsorial.** *Col. 2: 12, 13*

**R:** In baptism you were buried with him and raised with him \* through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

**V:** With him God has given life also to you, who were dead because of your sins, forgiving all of you,

**R:** through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *2 Cor. 8:1-24*

*Collection in favour of the brothers of Jerusalem.*

**A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.**

We want you to know, brethren, about the grace of God which has been shown in the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favour of taking part in the relief of the saints -- and this, not as we expected, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. Accordingly we have urged Titus that as he had already made a beginning, he should also complete among you this gracious work.

Now as you excel in everything -- in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in your love for us -- see that you excel in this gracious work also. I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

And in this matter I give my advice: it is best for you now to complete what a year ago you began not only to do but to desire, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he has not.

I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their want, so that their abundance may supply your want, that there may be equality.

As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack."

But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel; and not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work which we are carrying on, for the glory of the Lord and to show our good will.

We intend that no one should blame us about this liberal gift which we are administering, for we aim at what is honourable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of men. And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you.

As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker in your service; and as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. So give proof, before the churches, of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 8: 9; Phil. 2: 7*

**R:** Know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: from rich that he was, he made himself poor for you, \* so that you could become rich through his poverty.



**V:** He made himself nothing, assuming the condition of a servant.

**R:** so that you could become rich through his poverty.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 25: 1*

*Mercy, divine and human.*

**A reading from the “Discourses” of St. Caesar of Arles, bishop.**

‘Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy’ (Mt. 5: 7). Sweet is the name of mercy, dearest brethren; and if the name is sweet, how much sweeter is the quality itself? Yet though all men would wish to receive it, alas! Their own conduct is not such as to deserve it. All wish to receive mercy, few are ready to show mercy to others.

What effrontery to want to receive what you neglect to give! You must show mercy in this life if you hope to receive it in the next. And so, dearest brethren, since we all wish for mercy, let us make her our patroness in this age that she may free us in the future. For there is mercy in heaven, and we attain it through the acts of mercy that we perform on earth. this is what Scripture says: ‘O Lord, your mercy is in heaven’ (cfr. Ps. 35: 6).

There are two kinds of mercy then, mercy on earth and mercy in heaven, human mercy and divine mercy. What is human mercy like? It makes you concerned for the hardship of the poor. What is divine mercy like? It forgives sinners. Whatever generosity human mercy shows during our life on earth divine mercy repays when we reach our fatherland. In this world God is cold and hungry, in all the poor, as he himself said: ‘As you did it to one of the least of these brethren, you did it to me’ (Mt. 25: 40). God then is pleased to give from heaven, but he desires to receive on earth.

What sort of people are we – when God gives, we want to receive, when he asks, we refuse to give? When a poor man is hungry, Christ is in need, as he said himself: ‘I was hungry and you gave me no food’ (Mt. 25: 42). Take care not to despise the hardship of the poor, if you would hope, without fear, to have your sins forgiven. My dear brethren, Christ is now hungry, he is hungry and thirsty in all the poor; and what he receives on earth he returns in heaven.

I put you this question, dearly beloved: what is it you want, what is it you are looking for, when you come to Church? What indeed if not mercy? Show mercy on earth, and you will receive mercy in heaven. a poor man is begging from you, and you are begging from God: he asks for a scrap, you

ask for eternal life. Give to the beggar, so that you may deserve to receive from Christ. Listen to his words: 'Give and it shall be given you' (Lk. 6: 38). What effrontery it is for you to want to receive what you refuse to give! And so when you come to Church give whatever alms you can to the poor in accordance with your means.

**Responsorial.** *Lk. 6: 36 – 38; Mt. 5: 7*

**R:** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful; \* forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and gifts will be yours.

**V:** Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy;

**R:** forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and gifts will be yours.

**Gospel.** *Mk. 10:17-27*

*Sell what you have and follow me.*

**A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark.**

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour your father and mother.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

## TUESDAY

### CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 15:20-34*

*The resurrection of the dead.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.**

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death. "For God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection under him," it is plain that he is excluded who put all things under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one.

Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? Why am I in peril every hour? I protest, brethren, by my pride in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." Come to your right mind, and sin no more. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 15: 25-26; Ap. 20: 13, 14*

**R:** For Christ must reign until God has put all his enemies under his feet. \*  
The last enemy to be destroyed will be death.

**V:** The death and the underworld, after having given up the dead held by them, will be thrown into the pool of fire.

**R:** The last enemy to be destroyed will be death.

**Second Reading.** *Hom. 2: 89 – 93*

*As everyone dies in Adam,  
so also all receive life in Christ.*

**A reading from the “Homilies on the death of the brother” of St. Ambrose, bishop.**

“For this is the will of My Father, Who sent Me, that every one who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (Jn. 6: 40) Who was He that said this? He in truth Who when dead raised up many bodies of the departed. Even if we do not believe God, shall we not believe the evidence? Why do we not believe what He promised, since He did even that which He did not promise? And what reason would He have had for dying, had He not also had a reason for rising again?

For, seeing that God could not die, Wisdom could not die; and inasmuch as that which had not died could not rise again, he assumed flesh, so that he could subject himself to death like all men and, dying, he could rise again.

For the resurrection could not be effected except by man; since, “as death came through man, so too by man came the resurrection of the dead.” (1 Cor. 15: 21). He rose therefore as man, since as man he had died: the man is resurrected, but it is God who resurrects. Then it was man according to the Flesh, now God is all in all. For now we know not Christ according to the flesh, but we possess the grace of that Flesh, so that we say that we know Him the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15: 20), the firstborn of the dead.

Now the first-fruits are undoubtedly of the same nature and kind as the remaining fruits, the first of which are offered to God as a petition for a richer increase, as a holy thank-offering for all gifts, and as a kind of libation of that nature which has been restored. Christ, then, is the first fruits of them that are dead. But of which death? Of those who, as it were, freed from death, rest in a kind of sweet slumber, or of all those who are dead? “As in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15: 22) So, then, as the first fruits of death were in Adam, so also the first fruits of the resurrection are in Christ.

All men rise again, but let no one lose heart, and let not the just grieve at the common lot of rising again, since everyone will receive the reward of his own virtue. All indeed shall rise again, but, as says the Apostle, “each in his own order.” (1 Cor. 15: 23) The fruit of the Divine Mercy is common to all, but the order of merit differs.

The day gives light to all, the sun warms all, the rain fertilizes the possessions of all with genial showers. We are all born, and we shall all rise again, but in each state, whether of living or of living again, grace differs and the condition differs.

For, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the dead shall rise incorruptible and we shall be changed.” (1 Cor. 15: 52) Moreover, in death itself some rest, and some live. Rest is good, but life is better. And so the Apostle rouses him that is resting to life, saying: “Rise, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” (Ep. 5: 14).

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 15: 20, 22, 21*

**R:** Christ has risen from the dead, the first fruits of those who are dead; \* and as all die in Adam, so too in Christ shall all be made alive.

**V:** Through one man death came into the world, through one man the resurrection of the dead also will come.

**R:** And as all die in Adam, so too in Christ shall all be made alive.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *2 Cor. 9: 1-15*

*Be rich in every generosity.*

**A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.**

Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the offering for the saints, for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I am sending the brethren so that our boasting about you may not prove vain in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be; lest if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we be humiliated -- to say nothing of you -- for

being so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren to go on to you before me, and arrange in advance for this gift you have promised, so that it may be ready not as an exaction but as a willing gift.

The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever."

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God; for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God.

Under the test of this service, you will glorify God by your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ, and by the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others; while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

**Responsorial.** *Lk. 6: 38; 2 Cor. 9: 7*

**R:** Give and it will be given to you, a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap, \* for with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

**V:** Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion,

**R:** for with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

**Second Reading.** *Hom. 3:6*

*Sow for yourselves with an eye to righteousness.*

**A reading from the "Homilies" of St. Basil the Great, bishop.**

Imitate the earth; produce fruit like her, so that you will not seem inferior to inanimate matter. For the earth has nourished her crops with no intention of enjoying them herself but to serve you. But whatever fruit of

charity you may produce, you harvest for yourself, for the grace and reward of good works return to those who do them. You have given to the hungry, and what you gave becomes yours, and it returns to you with interest. As the corn that falls upon the earth yields a reward to the sower, so in the same way the bread given to a hungry man will bring you much reward hereafter. Therefore in your case, let the end of agriculture be the beginning of the heavenly sowing: 'Sow for yourselves with an eye to righteousness' (Hos. 10: 12).

Now you are going to leave your money behind you here whether you like it or not, but on the other hand you will be taking with you to the Lord the credit obtained for your good works. All who are standing round the judge of all men will hail you helper and generous benefactor and will use of you all the names that imply kindness and humanity. Don't you see those men who lavish their wealth on theatrical shows or boxing and wrestling contests, or mimes or shows where men fight with wild beasts, things one would disdain even to look at, and all for short-lived honours, for the shouts and applause of the people. and will you be stingy in spending money when so great a glory will be your reward? God will give you his approval, the angels will join in praising you, all those who have lived since the foundation of the world will proclaim you blessed; glory eternal, a crown of righteousness, a heavenly kingdom you will receive as a reward of corruptible things rightly dispensed. You pay no heed to all this, you who despise these good things which are stored up in hope because you are so wrapped up in the things of the present. Come then, scatter abroad your riches, be liberal and magnanimous in giving to the poor. Let it be said of you too: 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor, his righteousness endures forever' (Ps. 111: 9).

How deeply grateful you ought to be to the generous benefactor, how cheerful you should show yourself, how glad on account of the honour which is being conferred on you, that you will not keep knocking at the doors of others but the others will stand at yours. Now indeed you show yourself sullen and access to you is scarcely possible while you refuse to meet anyone for fear you might be compelled to let even a scrap slip through your fingers. You only know one phrase: 'I am a poor man, I've nothing to give'. Yes, you really are a poor man, without riches of any sort; poor in affection, poor in humanity, poor in faith in God, poor in eternal hope.

**Responsorial.** *Is. 58: 7-8*

**R:** Share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house. \* Then shall your light break forth like the dawn and your good works go before you.

**V:** Clothe the man you see to be naked and do not turn from your own kin.

**R:** Then shall your light break forth like the dawn and your good works go before you.

**Gospel.** *Mk. 10: 28-31*

*You will receive already in the present time hundredfold,  
together with persecution and in the future eternal life.*

**A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark.**

Peter began to say to him, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first."



# WEDNESDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 15:35-58*

*The resurrection on the last day.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.**

But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven.

Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. When the

perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 6: 13, 14; Rm. 4: 17*

**R:** The body is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. God then, who has raised the Lord, \* will raise us also with his power.

**V:** God, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist,

**R:** will raise us also with his power.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 117*

*The Word, Wisdom of God was made flesh.*

**A reading from the "Discourses" of St. Peter Chrysologos, bishop.**

The blessed apostle has recalled that two men gave a beginning to the human race, namely Adam and Christ: two men equal in physical nature but unequal in merit; truly alike in their bodily structure, but totally dissimilar in their own origin. The first 'Adam', he says, 'became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit' ( 1 Cor. 15: 45). That first Adam was made by this last, from whom he obtained the soul to give him life; the last was author of his own making: he did not look for life from another, but himself alone bestowed life on all. The first Adam is moulded from the vile dust of the earth, the second comes forth from the precious womb of the Virgin. In the first Adam earth is changed into flesh, in the last, flesh is raised up to God.

And what more? This last is the Adam, who when forming the first set his own image in him. Hence he assumed his role, and received his name to prevent the loss of what he had made to his own image. There is a first Adam, then, and a last Adam: the first has a beginning, this last has no end.

Because this last is in truth himself the first, as he says, ‘I am the first and the last’ (Is. 48: 12).

‘I am the first’, that is without beginning. ‘I am the last’, yes, without end. ‘But not first’, says scripture, ‘what is spiritual, but what is physical; then what is spiritual’ (1Cor. 15: 46). The earth certainly precedes its fruit; but the earth is not as precious as the fruit. The earth exacts groaning and toil, its fruit bestows substance and life. The prophet rightly boasts of such fruit in the words, ‘our earth has given its fruit’ (Ps. 84: 13). What fruit is this? That of which he says elsewhere, ‘One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne’ (Ps. 131: 11). ‘The first man’, says the apostle, ‘was from the earth, a man of dust, the second is from heaven’.

‘As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven’ (1 Cor. 15: 47-48). How shall those not born in such a condition be found so, remaining not as they were born, but as they were reborn? This is the reason, brothers, why the heavenly Spirit makes fertile the womb of the virginal font, by the secret admixture of his light, that it may bring forth as heavenly creatures, and bring back to the likeness of their Creator, those whom their origin in earth’s dust had produced as men of dust in a miserable state. So now reborn and refashioned to the likeness of our Creator, let us fulfil the apostle’s command: ‘Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, let us also bear the image of the man of heaven’ (1 Cor. 15: 49).

Now reborn after the pattern of our Lord, as I have said, let us bear the full and complete image of our maker: not in majesty, in which he is alone, but in innocence, simplicity, meekness, patience, humility, mercy and concord – in which he deigned to become and to be one with us.

**Responsorial.** *Rm. 5: 18, 12*

**R:** As one man’s fall brought condemnation on everyone, \* in the same way, the good act of one man brings life to all men and justifies them.

**V:** Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it;

**R:** in the same way, the good act of one man brings life to all men and justifies them.

## First Reading 2 Cor 10:1- 11:6

### *The apology of Paul*

I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ -- I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold to you when I am away! -- I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of acting in worldly fashion. For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and **take every thought captive to obey Christ**, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Look at what is before your eyes. If any one is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that as he is Christ's, so are we. For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame. I would not seem to be frightening you with letters. For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account."

Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present. Not that we venture to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding. But we will not boast beyond limit, but will keep to the limits God has apportioned us, to reach even to you. For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ. We do not boast beyond limit, in other men's labours; but our hope is that as your faith increases, our field among you may be greatly enlarged, so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another's field.

"Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord." For it is not the man who commends himself that is accepted, but the man whom the Lord commends.

I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you

as a pure bride to her one husband.

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if some one comes and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough. I think that I am not in the least inferior to these superlative apostles. Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not in knowledge; in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 10: 3-4; Ep. 6: 16, 17*

**R:** We live in the flesh but we do not fight according to the flesh. \* In fact the weapons of our battle are not carnal.

**V:** Always keep in your hand the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

**R:** In fact the weapons of our battle are not carnal.

**Second Reading** *Cat. 18: 23 – 25*

*The Church, that is the assembly of the people of God*

**From the “Catechesis” of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop**

The Church, **Catholic** or universal, gets her name from the fact that she is scattered through the whole world from the one end of the earth to the other, and also because she **teaches** universally and without omission **all the doctrines which are to be made known to mankind**, whether concerned with visible or invisible things, with heavenly or earthly things. Then again because she **teaches one way of worship to all men**, nobles or commoners, learned or simple; finally because she universally **cures and heals every sort of sin** which is committed by soul and body. Moreover there is **in her every kind of virtue** in words and deeds and **spiritual gifts of every sort**.

The Church, that is, the assembly, is designated by this apt term, because it assembles all and brings them together, as the Lord says in Leviticus: “Assemble all the congregation at the door of the tent of meeting” (cfr. Lev. 8: 3). Moreover it is worth noting that this word ‘assemble’ is first used in Scripture in the place where the Lord appointed Aaron to the high priesthood. And in Deuteronomy God says to Moses:

“Assemble the people that they may hear my words, that they may learn to fear me” (cfr. Deut. 4: 10). He mentions the Church or assembly again when he speaks of the tables of the law: “In them were written all the words which the Lord spoke with you on the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, on the day of the Church or assembly” (cfr. Deut. 10: 4); or to put it more clearly, “On the day on which you were called by the Lord and assembled together”. The psalmist also says: “I will give you thanks, O Lord, in the great Church, in the gathering of the throng I will praise you”. (Ps. 34: 18).

Earlier the psalmist had sung: “Bless the Lord in the Church, bless God, you who are Israel’s sons” (Ps. 67: 27). The second Church the Saviour built from the Gentiles, our holy Church of the Christians, of which he said to Peter: “On this rock I will build my Church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it” (Mt: 16: 18).

After the peculiar Church of Judea was repudiated, many Churches of Christ are now multiplied throughout the whole world, of which it is written in the psalms: “Sing to the Lord a new song, let his praise be in the Church of the saints” (Ps. 149: 1). Echoing this the prophet said to the Jews: “I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of Hosts”, and immediately he adds, “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations” (Mal. 1: 10, 11). About the same holy Catholic Church Paul writes to Timothy: “That you may know how one ought to live in the household of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Tm. 3: 14).

**Responsorial.** *1 Pet. 2: 9-10*

**R:** You are a chosen race, a dedicated nation, \* a people chosen by God for his own to proclaim the triumphs of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

**V:** Once, you were not his people, but now you are the people of God,

**R:** a people chosen by God for his own to proclaim the triumphs of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

**Gospel.** *Mk. 10: 32-45*

*Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of man will be handed over.*

**A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark.**

And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise."

And James and John, the sons of Zeb'edee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

# THURSDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 16:1-24*

*Recommendations and greetings.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.**

Now concerning the contribution for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come.

And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me. I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may speed me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now just in passing; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. So let no one despise him. Speed him on his way in peace, that he may return to me; for I am expecting him with the brethren. As for our brother Apol'los, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brethren, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.

Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Steph'anas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and labourer. I rejoice at the coming of Steph'anas and Fortuna'tus and Acha'icus, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men.

The churches of Asia send greetings. Aq'uila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.



I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 16: 13-14; Col. 4: 5, 6*

**R:** Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. \* Let all that you do be done in love.

**V:** Behave wisely: let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt.

**R:** Let all that you do be done in love.

### **Second Reading.**

*Look how much Jesus loves us.*

**A reading from the Treatise “On the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist” of Baldwin of Canterbury, bishop.**

He who was to come, the Holy One of Israel, came. He appeared on earth made man and lived amongst men. He made known to the world the ways of life and, having accomplished the mission for which he had come, he ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father, where he is now to be found.

So that the disciples and all those who later on would be his faithful, deprived of his bodily presence would not despair of his help, before ascending into heaven he consoled them saying: “Behold, I will be with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mt. 28: 20). Our Jesus, therefore, is with us. Why should we not say “our”, from the moment that he is with us? The Son, in fact, has been given for us (cfr. Is. 9: 5) Not wrongly did he who say: “But I will rejoice in the Lord, I will exult in God my Saviour” (Hab. 3: 18), claim Jesus as his own.

This our Jesus with whom God has given us everything, does not know how to stay far away from us; he loves us, as he himself who is the Wisdom of the Father says: “My delight is among the sons of man” (Prv. 8: 31). He remained with us in the flesh, before dying for us; he remained with us also in death, with the presence of the body not yet taken away from the earth; he remained with us after death, appearing under different aspects to the disciples; he remains with us now also, until the end of the ages, as long as we remain near to him. Therefore we will always be with the Lord.

This is how Jesus loves us. Neither death nor life can separate him from us; so strong is his love for us. And for this, neither death nor life should separate us from his love. Which other creature is worthy of love apart from him? And who can we love like him? Unless we are ungrateful and perverse, the certainty that he loves us, without saying anything else, should be enough for us. Nothing else but an answer of love is necessary for he who loves: he who loves demands that his love is returned, and it is just that it is so. But he who wants to be loved without loving, would not be able to justify himself even in front of himself. He who does not render love for love is unworthy of being loved. He then who does not love Jesus, does so at his great risk, worthy as he is of the execration and curse of the Apostle who says: If someone does not love the Lord, let him be anathema. Maranatha: Come, O Lord!" (1 Cor. 16: 22).

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 3: 16; Hab. 3: 13*

**R:** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, \* that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

**V:** You have come out to save your people, to save your consecrated,

**R:** that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *2 Cor. 11: 7-29*

*Against false apostles.*

**A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.**

Did I commit a sin in abasing myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel without cost to you? I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. And when I was with you and was in want, I did not burden any one, for my needs were supplied by the brethren who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.

As the truth of Christ is in me, this boast of mine shall not be silenced in the regions of Achaia.

And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would

like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

I repeat, let no one think me foolish; but even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. (What I am saying I say not with the Lord's authority but as a fool, in this boastful confidence; since many boast of worldly things, I too will boast.) For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves!

For you bear it if a man makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever any one dares to boast of -- I am speaking as a fool -- I also dare to boast of that. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one -- I am talking like a madman -- with far greater labours, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.

Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

**Responsorial.** *Gal. 1: 11, 12; 2 Cor. 11: 10, 7*

**R:** The gospel that I have announced is not modelled on man; \* in fact I have not received it from men, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

**V:** The truth of Christ that I have announced, the gospel of God, is in me;

**R:** in fact I have not received it from men, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

**Second Reading. Cat. 18: 26 – 29**

*The Church, bride of Christ.*

**A reading from the “Catechesis” of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop.**

The Church is called ‘Catholic’: such is the proper name of the holy Church which is the mother of us all. She is also the bride of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God (for it is written in the scripture, ‘Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her’ (Ep. 5: 25), and so on). Moreover she fulfils the type and carries out the pattern of the Jerusalem which is from above, which is free and is the mother of us all. Though she was at first childless, she is now the parent of a mighty family.

After the former Church had been rejected, in the second, that is, the Catholic Church, God has appointed, as Paul says, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues and every type of virtue: I mean wisdom and intelligence, self-control and justice, mercy and humanity, and invincible endurance in persecution.

However, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, through honour and dishonour, first in persecution and distress she wreathed her sacred martyrs with crowns of endurance interwoven with manifold and varied flowers; now in times of peace, she receives by the grace of God due honour from kings and men of rank, in a word from every sort and kind of person. And though the kings of nations spread round the world have limits to their sovereignty, it is the holy Catholic Church alone which in the whole earth rejoices in unlimited sovereignty; as it is written, God ‘has appointed peace as his boundary’ (cfr. Ps. 147: 14).

In this holy Catholic Church, formed by its teaching and living as we ought, we shall possess the kingdom of heaven and inherit eternal life. For the sake of this we endure everything, that we may gain that life from the Lord. We have no modest aim, but the gaining of eternal life; that is the object of our striving. For this reason we are taught in the Creed that after ‘And in the resurrection of the flesh’ that is, of the dead, which we have already discussed, we affirm our belief ‘in life everlasting’. This is the object of our efforts as Christians.

Therefore, the Father is life really and truly. Through the Son he pours forth upon all in the Holy Spirit the gifts of heaven as from a fountain, and

in his kingdom to us men he has promised truly to each the good gift of eternal life.

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 32: 12*

**R:** Blessed are the people of Israel whom the Lord of Hosts has chosen, \* to whom he has said: You are the work of my hands; you are my very own.

**V:** Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen as his heritage,

**R:** to whom he has said: You are the work of my hands; you are my very own.

**Gospel.** *Mk. 10: 46-52*

*Rabbi that I may have my sight again.*

**A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark.**

And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, Bartimae'us, a blind beggar, the son of Timae'us, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; rise, he is calling you." And throwing off his mantle he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Master, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

# FRIDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Jam. 1:1-18*

*Perfect joy in every type of trial.*

**A reading from the Letter of St. James, apostle.**

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greeting.

Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord.

Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like the flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one; but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

**Responsorial.** *Jam. 1: 12; 2 Tm. 4: 7-8*

**R:** Blessed is the man who bears temptation, because once he has overcome the test he will receive the crown of life, \* which the Lord has promised to those who love him.

**V:** I have fought the good fight, I have run the course, I have conserved the faith. Now only the crown of justice remains for me,

**R:** which the Lord has promised to those who love him

**Second Reading.** *Cc. 1 – 2*

*Where the toil is greater, greater is the prize.*

**A reading from the “Letter to Polycarp” of St. Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr.**

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to Polycarp, Bishop of the Church of the Smyrnaeans, or rather, who has, as his own bishop, God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: wishing you abundance of happiness. Having obtained good proof that your mind is fixed in God as upon an immoveable rock, I loudly glorify His name that I have been thought worthy to behold your blameless face, which may I ever enjoy in God! I entreat you, by the grace with which you are clothed, to press forward in your course, and to exhort all that they may be saved. Maintain your position with all care, both in the flesh and spirit. Have a regard to preserve unity, than which nothing is more precious. Bear with all, even as the Lord does with you. Support all in love, as also you do. Give yourself to prayer without ceasing. Implore additional understanding to what you already have. Be watchful, possessing a sleepless spirit. Speak to every man separately, as God enables you. Bear the infirmities of all, as being a perfect athlete in the Christian life: where the labour is great, the gain is all the more.

If you love the good disciples, no thanks are due to you on that account; but rather seek by meekness to subdue the more troublesome. Every kind of wound is not healed with the same medicine. Mitigate violent attacks of disease by gentle applications. Be in all things “wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove.” (cfr. Mt. 10: 16).

For this purpose you are composed of both flesh and spirit, that you may deal tenderly with those evils that present themselves visibly before

you. And as respects those that are not seen, pray that God would reveal them unto you, in order that you may be wanting in nothing, but may abound in every gift.

The times call for you, as pilots do for the winds, and as one tossed with tempest seeks for the haven, so that both you and those under your care may attain to God. Be sober as an athlete of God: the prize set before you is immortality and eternal life, of which you are also persuaded. In all things may my soul be for yours, and my bonds also, which you have loved.

**Responsorial.** *1 Tm. 6: 11-12; 2 Tm. 2: 10*

**R:** But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. \* Fight the good fight of faith, take hold of the eternal life.

**V:** Bear everything for the elect, so that they also may obtain salvation.

**R:** Fight the good fight, take hold of the eternal life.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading** *2 Cor 11: 30- 12:13*

*When I am weak, it is then that I am strong*

If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I do not lie.

At Damascus, the governor under King Ar'etas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped his hands.

I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen



years ago was caught up to the third heaven -- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise -- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. Though if I wish to boast, I shall not be a fool, for I shall be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me.

And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these superlative apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. For in what were you less favoured than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 12: 9; 4: 7*

**R:** I will willingly boast of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. \* His power in fact is manifested fully in weakness.

**V:** We have this treasure in earthenware vessels, so that the extraordinary power that comes from God may appear.

**R:** His power in fact is manifested fully in weakness.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 247: 5 – 6*

*Not I alone, but the grace of God that is with me.*

**A reading from the “Discourses” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

Pay attention to the apostle Paul, reflect on his words: “For I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time has come for my

departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day” (2 Tm. 4: 6-8).

He who has given me that which was not due to me, will not deny me what is due to me. The just judge will give the crown, he will give it: he has in fact one to whom to give it “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” he will give the crown for these merits, and as I have said, he who has given what is not due will not deny what is due. What does not due signify? Let us listen to Paul himself while he confesses and praises the giver of the grace confessing his own life.

In precedence, he says, “I was a blasphemer, a persecutor and a violent man” (1 Tm. 1: 13). And therefore, was it due to you to be an apostle? What was due to a blasphemer, to a persecutor, to a violent man? What, if not eternal damnation? And in its place what have you received? “I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief” (1 Tm. 1: 13). This is the mercy that God grants, without it being due.

Listen again to another affirmation that he makes elsewhere: “I am not worthy, to call myself an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God” (1 Cor. 15: 9). It is really clear, apostle, that you were not worthy. And how did you become worthy? For what reason are you now worthy? “But through the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15: 10). It was my fault that I was what I was, but through the grace of God I am what I am. “Through the grace of God, I say, I am what I am, and his grace in me has not been in vain; in fact I have toiled more than them” (1 Cor. 15: 10).

Have you answered, therefore, to the grace of God? You have received, but have you given back? Pay careful attention, Paul, to that which you have said. I pay attention, he says: “not I, however, but the grace of God which is with me” (1 Cor. 15: 10). And therefore, will God the just judge, deny to this apostle, who toils, who runs a good race, who sets out towards the end, who keeps the faith, the reward due to him, after having given him a grace that was not due to him?

You have contested that there exists another law in the body which opposes your convictions, and that drags you as a slave under the law of sin, and that you perceive it in every part of your body. How to carry off a victory, without taking account of what follows? “What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rm. 7: 24-25). The battle, the toil, the

perseverance, the victory comes to you from here. Observe this man who fights: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Perhaps the tribulations, the anguish, the persecutions, hunger, nakedness; danger, the sword? Exactly as it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long, we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered” (Rm. 8: 35-36). How much weakness, toil, misery, dangers, temptations!

And from where does the victory come of the one who fights? Listen to what follows: “But in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Rm. 8: 37). Have you run fully your way: under the guidance, the command, with the help of whom? What do you affirm at this point? You have been faithful, it is true. But above all, of what faithfulness are we dealing with? Of that which you have established by yourself?

That which you have affirmed is false: “Judge yourselves each one in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you” (Rm. 12: 3). Is it not you who turn to some of your companions in battle, companions in toil and in the race in the stadium of this life, and say to them: “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him” (Phil. 1: 29)? This, to believe in Christ and to suffer for him: these are the things given in gift.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 2: 3-4, 5, 1*

**R:** I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, \* so that your faith may not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.

**V:** I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God,

**R:** so that your faith may not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.

**Gospel.** *Mk. 11: 11-26*

*My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples.*

*Have faith in God.*

**A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark.**

And he entered Jerusalem, and went into the temple; and when he had looked round at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And he said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it.

And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold pigeons; and he would not allow any one to carry anything through the temple. And he taught, and said to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."

And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and sought a way to destroy him; for they feared him, because the entire multitude was astonished at his teaching. And when evening came they went out of the city.

As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, "Master, look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered." And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

# SATURDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Jam. 1:19-27*

*Put in practise the Word, do not only listen to it.*

**A reading from the Letter of St. James, apostle.**

Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing.

If any one thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

**Responsorial.** *Jam. 1: 21; Phil. 1: 27; 2: 15, 16*

**R:** Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, \* which is able to save your souls.

**V:** Behave like citizens worthy of the gospel, so that you may be irreprehensible and simple, sons of God, keeping high the word of life,

**R:** which is able to save your souls.

**Second Reading.** *Cc. 3 – 5*

*Do everything to honour God.*

**A reading from the “Letter to Polycarp” of St. Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr.**

Let not those who seem worthy of credit, but teach strange doctrines, fill you with apprehension. Stand firm, as does an anvil that is beaten. It is the part of a noble athlete to be wounded, and yet to conquer. And especially, we ought to bear all things for the sake of God, that He also may bear with us.

Try always to be more zealous than what you are. Weigh carefully the times. Look for Him who is above all time, eternal and invisible, yet who became visible for our sakes; impalpable and impassable, yet who became passable on our account; and who in every kind of way suffered for our sakes. Let not widows be neglected. Be, after the Lord, their protector and friend. Let nothing be done without your consent; do not do anything without the approval of God, which indeed you do not, inasmuch as you are steadfast. Let your assembling together be of frequent occurrence: invite each one personally.

Do not despise either male or female slaves, yet neither let them be puffed up with conceit, but rather let them submit themselves the more, for the glory of God, that they may obtain from God a better liberty. Let them not long to be set free [from slavery] at the public expense, that they may not be found slaves to their own desires.

Flee evil arts; but all the more speak in public against them. Speak to my sisters, that they love the Lord, and be satisfied with their husbands both in the flesh and spirit. In like manner also, exhort my brethren, in the name of Jesus Christ, that they love their wives, even as the Lord loved the Church (Ep. 5: 25).

If any one can continue in a state of purity, to the honour of Him who is Lord of the flesh, let him so remain without boasting. If he begins to boast, he is undone; and if he reckons himself greater than the bishop, he is ruined. But it becomes both men and women who marry, to form their union with the approval of the bishop, that their marriage may be according to God, and not after their own lust. Let all things be done to the honour of God.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 15: 58; 2 Thes. 3: 13*

**R:** Stand firm let nothing move you, always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, \* knowing that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

**V:** Do not get discouraged in doing good,

**R:** knowing that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

## CYCLE 2

### **First Reading** 2 Cor 12:14- 13:13

#### *The coming visit of Paul*

Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you the more, am I to be loved the less?

But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by guile. Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps? Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves before you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your up building, beloved. For I fear that perhaps I may come and find you not what I wish, and that you may find me not what you wish; that perhaps there may be quarrelling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned before and have not repented of the impurity, immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced. This is the third time I am coming to you. Any charge must be sustained by the evidence of two or three witnesses. I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them – since you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful in you.

For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we shall live with him by the power of God. Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? --

unless indeed you fail to meet the test! I hope you will find out that we have not failed. But we pray God that you may not do wrong -- not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. What we pray for is your improvement. I write this while I am away from you, in order that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority which the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Mend your ways, heed my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 13: 11; Phil 4: 7*

**R:** Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace, \* and the God of love and peace will be with you.

**V:** The peace of God, which surpasses all intelligence, will preserve your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus;

**R:** and the God of love and peace will be with you.

**Second Reading.** *Lett. 265: 7 – 8*

*The necessity of daily prayer.*

**A reading from the “Letters” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

Men must do penance before baptism for their preceding sins, in order to prepare themselves the better to be baptised, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, when Peter says to the Jews: “Repent and be baptised, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven” (Act. 2: 38)

They must also do penance after baptism if they have sinned in such a way as to receive the excommunication, in order to be then able to merit reconciliation, like all those who in the proper sense are called “penitents” in all the Churches. Of this type of penance the apostle Paul speaks when he says: “I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not



repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged” (2 Cor. 12: 20-21).

And these things he wrote exactly for those who were already baptised.

There is finally a type of penance almost everyday, accomplished by the good and humble faithful, when we beat our breasts and say: “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”. And we do not ask that we be forgiven the sins which we have no doubt have been forgiven in baptism, but those small and true, but frequent ones which infiltrate in the human weakness. If they were all debited to us, they would weigh us down and oppress us like a serious sin. What difference in fact is there if the ship is shipwrecked because it is ripped open and submerged by one unique enormous wave, or, because the water, seeping in little by little into the bottom and negligently ignored or disregarded, fills up and sinks the ship?

For this reason fasting, almsgiving, prayers act as sentries. Praying: “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” we declare that we have something for which we need to be forgiven; and humiliating our hearts with such words, let us not cease to do daily penance in some way.

**Responsorial.** *Bar. 3: 2; Ps. 84: 5*

**R:** Let us correct ourselves immediately from the evil committed in our ignorance, so that when we will be surprised by death we will not search in vain for a deferment, and it will not be too late to convert ourselves. \* Listen, Lord, have pity, for we have sinned against you.

**V:** Raise us up. Lord, our salvation, and calm your anger against us.

**R:** Listen, Lord, have pity, for we have sinned against you.

**Gospel.** *Mk. 11: 27-33*

*With what authority do you do these things.*

**A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark.**

And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?" Jesus said to them, "I will ask you a question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? Answer me." And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then

did you not believe him?' But shall we say, 'From men'?" -- they were afraid of the people, for all held that John was a real prophet. So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."