

## WEEK 6

### SUNDAY

#### CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Jn. 1: 1-10*

*Jesus, Word of life and light of God.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. John, apostle.**

[1 John 1:1] That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life --

[1 John 1:2] the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us --

[1 John 1:3] that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

[1 John 1:4] And we are writing this that our joy may be complete.

[1 John 1:5] This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

[1 John 1:6] If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth;

[1 John 1:7] but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

[1 John 1:8] If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

[1 John 1:9] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[1 John 1:10] If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. 1 Jn. 1: 2, 5, 20*

**R:** This life has been made visible; we have seen it and we testify to it. We announce to you the eternal life, \* that was with the Father and has been

made visible to us, alleluia.

**V:** We know that the Son of God has come: he is the true God and the eternal life,

**R:** that was with the Father and has been made visible to us, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Tratt. 1, 5-6*

*Charity covers a multitude of sins.*

**A reading from the “Treatise on the first Letter of St. John” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

For we are running, and running to our own country; and if we despair of attaining it, by that very despair we fail. But He whose will it is that we attain, that He may keep us safe in our own land, feeds us in the way. Let us listen then: “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not put into practise the truth.” Let us not say that we have fellowship with Him, if we walk in darkness. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” Let us walk in the light, as He is in the light, that we may be able to have fellowship with Him. And what are we to do about our sins? Hear what follows, “And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son shall purge us from all sin.” What does he mean, “from all sin”? Behold: even now, in the name of Christ whom these here have now confessed, who are called infants, have all their sins been cleansed. They came in old, they went out new. What does he mean? For the old life is old age with all its dotage, but the new life is the infancy of regeneration. But what are we to do? The past sins are pardoned, not only to these but also to us; and after the pardon and abolition of all sins, we who live in this world in the midst of temptations, have committed others. Therefore what he can, let man do; let him confess himself to be what he is, that he may be cured by Him who always is what He is: for He always was and is; we were not and are.

For see what He says; “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Consequently, if you have confessed yourself a sinner, the truth is in you: for the Truth itself is light. Your life has not yet shone in perfect brightness, because there are sins in you; but yet you have already begun to be enlightened, because there is in you the

confession of sins. For see what follows: "If we confess our sins, He who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins, and purge us from all iniquity." Not only from the past fault, but also from those eventually committed after baptism; because a man, so long as he bears the flesh, cannot but have some at any rate light sins. And these light sins, of which we speak, do not underestimate them. If you make light of them when you weigh them, be afraid when you count them.

Many light sins make one huge sin: many drops fill the river; many grains make the lump. And what hope is there? Before all, confession: lest any think himself righteous, and, before the eyes of God who sees that which is, man, that was not and is, lift up the neck. Before all, then, confession; then, love: for of charity in fact it is written: "Charity covers a multitude of sins."

**Responsorial.** *1 Jn. 4: 19, 10-11; Jn. 15: 13*

**R:** God has loved us first and has sent his Son as the victim of expiation for our sins. \*Dearly beloved, if God has loved us like this, we too must love one another, alleluia.

**V:** No one has a greater love than this: to lay down his life for his own friends.

**R:** Dearly beloved, if God has loved us like this, we too must love one another, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 20: 17-38*

*Paul at Miletus speaks to the elders of the Church of Ephesus.*

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.**

[Acts 20:17] And from Mile'tus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.

[Acts 20:18] And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you all the time from the first day that I set foot in Asia,

[Acts 20:19] serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which befell me through the plots of the Jews;

[Acts 20:20] how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,

[Acts 20:21] testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Acts 20:22] And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, bound in the Spirit, not knowing what shall befall me there;

[Acts 20:23] except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

[Acts 20:24] But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

[Acts 20:25] And now, behold, I know that all you among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom will see my face no more.

[Acts 20:26] Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you,

[Acts 20:27] for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

[Acts 20:28] Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son.

[Acts 20:29] I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

[Acts 20:30] and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

[Acts 20:31] Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

[Acts 20:32] And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

[Acts 20:33] I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.

[Acts 20:34] You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me.

[Acts 20:35] In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

[Acts 20:36] And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

[Acts 20:37] And they all wept and embraced Paul and kissed him,  
[Acts 20:38] sorrowing most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they brought him to the ship.

**Responsorial.** *Act. 20: 28; 1 Cor. 4: 2*

**R:** Keep vigil over all the flock, in the midst of whom the Holy Spirit has placed you \*To shepherd the Church of God, that he has acquired with his blood. Alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful

**R:** to shepherd the Church of God, that he has acquired with his blood. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 55, 1-2*

*Christ compared to the eagle.*

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

Man is brought back by grace to the younger age and, though being exhausted by old age, he is born again in the habits which are that of an innocent child, in a way that, after having received the Sacrament, from old we find ourselves children again. The renewal signifies the leaving of that which you were and assuming that which we were at the beginning. To such a renewal the neophytes are called, for which having abandoned the past faults for a new life, they receive the grace of simplicity, as the Apostle says: “You must put off the old man with its conduct of the past and put on the new man, created according to God” (Ep. 4: 22, 24). As David also says: “You renew like an eagle your youth” (Ps. 102: 5); in these words you can understand the grace of baptism, through which all that in our life which is about to die can be reborn, and renew itself in youth that which is ruined by the oldness of sin. And so that you also may know that the prophet speaks of the grace of baptism, he has compared the renewal to that of the eagle, who it is said changes continuously its feathers: while it loses the old it rejuvenates itself with the new that substitutes them, so that, after having put aside the mortal remains of the past, it clothes itself again with the new.

Our neophytes also recently baptised, having put aside like the eagle the mortal remains of the past, have put on the new garment of holiness and, while the past sins have failed, they are adorned with the grace of immortality. In them has become old only the fleeting sins of old age, not life, and like the eagle is transformed into a renewed youth, so also they are reborn into the spiritual infancy. They know how they should behave in the world, but they are lacking the security in the way of the recovered justice.

Let us consider therefore with greater attention that which the holy David says; he does not say: he will renew like the eagles your youth, but like the eagle. He affirms therefore that our youth has to be renewed like one unique eagle. I would say that this one and only eagle is in reality Christ the Lord, whose youth was renewed when he rose from the dead. He laid aside the mortal remains of the corruptible body, and flowered again assuming the flesh that was restored to life, as he himself says through the prophet: “ My flesh has flowered again and with my song I will render thanks” (cfr. Ps. 27: 7 Vulg). He says: “my flesh has flowered again”. Look what verb he has used. He does not say: has flowered, but has flowered again. In fact that which had not flowered before cannot flower again. The flesh of the Lord had flowered, when for the first time he came out of the virgin womb of the Virgin Mary, as the prophet Isaiah says: “A shoot will spring from the trunk of Jesse, a shoot will grow from his roots” (Is. 11:1). Instead he has flowered again when, the flower of his body cut off by the Jews, sprouted again brought back to life in the glory of the resurrection; and like a flower he has exhaled over all men the perfume and the splendour of immortality, pouring out that is the sweet scent of the good works and showing the splendour of the incorruptible eternal divinity.

**Responsorial.** *Rm. 7: 6; 5: 6*

**R:** Now we have been freed from the law, having died to that which kept us prisoners: \* in order to serve in the new regime of the Spirit and not in the old regime of the written code, alleluia.

**V:** The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us

**R:** in order to serve in the new regime of the Spirit and not in the old regime of the written code, alleluia.

YEAR A

**Gospel. Jn. 14: 15-21**

*I will pray to the Father and he will give you another Consoler.*

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

[John 14:15] "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

[John 14:16] And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever,

[John 14:17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

[John 14:18] "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.

[John 14:19] Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also.

[John 14:20] In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

[John 14:21] He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

**Third Reading. Hom. 75,1**

*I will not leave you orphans.*

**A reading from the "Homilies on the gospel of John" of St. John Chrysostom, bishop.**

"If you love me, you will observe my commandments" (Jn. 14: 15). I have given you a commandment, that you love one another and that you do to one another as I have done to you. This is love: to follow the commandments and to submit oneself to the beloved. "I will pray to the Father and he will give you another Consoler" (Jn. 14: 16). These are words of one who is about to go away. And since they still did not know him well, it is likely that, while he was absent, they would have searched for his company, his words, his physical presence and nothing would have been able to console them of his absence. And what does he say? "I will pray to the Father and he will give you another Consoler"; that is Another who will be like me.

After he has purified them with his sacrifice, then the Holy Spirit will arrive unexpectedly. Why did it not descend when Jesus was in the midst of them? Because the sacrifice had not yet been offered. When then the sin had already been destroyed and they, having been sent amongst the dangers, were preparing themselves for the battle, the coming of the Consoler was necessary. But why then had the Spirit not come immediately after the resurrection? So that they could receive it with greater desire and with a greater grace.

In fact, as long as Christ was with them, they were not afflicted; but when he had gone, they remained alone and very frightened, they awaited him with great desire. “So that it may remain with you” (Jn. 14: 16), that is it will not withdraw from you even after your death. So that, then, hearing him speak of the Paraclete, they would not think of a new incarnation in the hope of being able to see him with the eyes, in order to exclude this idea Christ adds: “that the world cannot receive, because it does not see him” (Jn. 14: 17).

He will not live with you like I did, but he will live in your souls: this is what that “I will be in you” means. He calls him then Spirit of truth, designating in this way the figures of the old law. “So that he may remain with you”. What does this mean? That which he had said of himself: “I am with you” (Mt. 28: 20). But other than this, he indicates also: he will not suffer that which I have suffered, nor will he go away.

“That the world cannot receive, because it does not see him” (Jn. 14: 17). How? Was he perhaps in the number of the visible things? Not at all. But Christ here means the knowledge; he adds in fact: “and do not know him”; habitually the accurate knowledge is called vision, the sight being the most penetrating of our senses. He calls the wicked, world and with this he consoles the disciples, offering them this precious gift. Do you see how he exalts the greatness of the gift: he says that it is another, different from him; he adds that he will not leave them, and then that he will come only to those to whom he had come. And again: “He will remain in you”.

But not even in this way is he able to cast out the sadness of the disciples. They continue to search for him and for his company. In order to help them he says: “I will not leave you orphans, I will return to you” (Jn. 14: 18). Do not fear; I did not tell you that I would send you another Paraclete because I was going to abandon you forever. I did not say that I



would remain in you, almost as if I would not see you anymore. In reality, I myself will come to you. "I will not leave you orphans" (Jn. 14: 18).

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 14: 18, 28; 16: 7*

**R:** I will not leave you orphans, alleluia; I go and I will return to you, \* and your hearts will rejoice, alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** If I do not go, the Consoler will not come to you; but when I have gone, I will send him to you,

**R:** and your hearts will rejoice, alleluia, alleluia.

YEAR B

**Gospel.** *Jn. 15: 9-17*

*No one has a greater love than this: to give his own life for his friends.*

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

[John 15:9] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.

[John 15:10] If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

[John 15:11] These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

[John 15:12] "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

[John 15:13] Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

[John 15:14] You are my friends if you do what I command you.

[John 15:15] No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

[John 15:16] You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

[John 15:17] This I command you, to love one another.

**Third Reading.** *Tratt. 82, 1-4*

*We love Christ when we observe his commandments.*

**A reading from the “Commentary on the gospel of St. John” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

The Saviour, in thus speaking to the disciples, commends still more and more the grace whereby we are saved, when He says, “Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear very much fruit, and be made my disciples.” For if herein God the Father is glorified, that we bear much fruit, and be made the disciples of Christ, let us not credit our own glory therewith, as if we had it of ourselves. For of Him is such a grace, and accordingly therein the glory is not ours, but His. Hence also, in another passage, after saying, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works;” to keep them from the thought that such good works were of themselves, He immediately added, “and may glorify your Father who is in heaven.” For herein is the Father glorified, that we bear much fruit, and be made the disciples of Christ. And by whom are we so made, but by Him whose mercy has forestalled us? For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

“As the Father has loved me,” He says, “so have I loved you: continue you in my love.” Here, then, you see, is the source of our good works. For whence should we have them. Were it not that faith works by love? And how should we love, were it not that we were first loved? With striking clearness is this declared by the same evangelist in his epistle: “We love God because He first loved us.”

For the Father, indeed, also loves us, but in Him; for herein is the Father glorified, that we bear fruit in the vine, that is, in the Son, and so be made His disciples.

“Remain,” He says, “in my love.” How shall we remain? Listen to what follows: “If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love.” Love brings about the keeping of His commandments; but does the keeping of His commandments bring about love? Who can doubt that it is love that precedes? For he has no true ground for keeping the commandments who is destitute of love.

And so, in saying, “If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love,” He shows not the source from which love springs, but the means whereby it is manifested. As if He said, Think not that you abide in my love if you keep not my commandments; for it is only if you have kept them that

you shall abide. In other words, it will thus be made apparent that you shall abide in my love if you keep my commandments.

So that no one need deceive himself by saying that he loves Him, if he keeps not His commandments. For we love Him just in the same measure as we keep His commandments; and the less we keep them, the less we love.

It is not therefore in order to obtain his love that we observe all that he commands us: if he had not loved us first, we would not be able to observe his precepts. This is the grace that is revealed to the humble. While it remains hidden to the proud.

**Responsorial. Jn. 14: 21**

**R:** He who loves me will be loved by my Father, \* and I will love him also and I will manifest myself to him, alleluia.

**V:** He who welcomes my commandments and observes them, is one who loves me.

**R:** and I will love him also and I will manifest myself to him, alleluia.

YEAR C

**Gospel. Jn. 14: 23- 29**

*The Holy Spirit will remind you of all that I have told you.*

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

[John 14:23] Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

[John 14:24] He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

[John 14:25] "These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you.

[John 14:26] But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

[John 14:27] Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

[John 14:28] You heard me say to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I.

[John 14:29] And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe.

**Third Reading.** *Disc. 27, 8-10*

*If I do not have charity, I am nothing.*

**A reading from the “Discourses on the Song of Songs” of St. Bernard, abbot.**

“I and the Father” says the Son, “will come to him and we make our home in him (Jn. 14: 23). To him, that is to the holy man. I think that the prophet also did not speak of anything else when he said: “ Yet you live in the holy dwelling, you, the praise of Israel” (Ps. 21: 4). The Apostle also declares: “That the Christ lives through faith in your hearts” (Ep. 3: 17).

It is not to be marvelled at, if the Lord Jesus is pleased to live in this heaven, for which he not only says: “Be it”, as for the other creatures, but he fought in order to conquer it and died in order to redeem it. For this, after having suffered, he says with more desire: “This is my rest forever; here I will live, because I have desired it” (Ps. 131: 14). Blessed is the soul of whom it is said: “Come, my friend” (Sg of Sgs. 2: 10, 13; 4: 7, 8) and I will place my throne in you. Why therefore are you sad, O my soul, and why do you groan over me? Do you think perhaps that you will not find place in yourself for the Lord? And which place in us can be capable of his glory and sufficient for his majesty? That I may deserve at least to adore him in the place that is the footstool for his feet! Who will make it possible for me to adhere to the footprints of some holy soul whom the Lord has chosen as his inheritance? Yet, if he will deign to infuse in my soul also the oil of his mercy, so that I also can say: “I run along the way of your commandments, because you have enlarged my heart” (Ps. 118: 32), then perhaps I will also be able to offer in myself, if not a great adorned cenacle where he can sit down at table with his disciples, at least a place where he can rest his head.

Moreover it is necessary that the soul grows and enlarges its capacity to receive God. Its capacity is its love, as the Apostle says: enlarge your hearts (cfr. 2 Cor. 6: 13). In fact, even if the soul, being spirit, does not occupy in fact a bodily extension, yet grace brings to it that which is denied to it by

the nature. It grows and extends, but spiritually. It grows and progresses in the perfect man, in the measure that is necessary for the full maturity of Christ; it grows also as the holy temple of the Lord.

Therefore the greatness of every soul is measured by the charity that it possesses: the one which has much is great, that which has a little is small, that which does not have at all is nothing, as St. Paul says: "If I do not have love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13: 2).

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 14: 23; 1 Jn. 2: 5*

**R:** If anyone loves me, he will observe my word and my Father will love him, \* and we will come to him and we will make our home in him, alleluia.

**V:** The love of God is truly perfect in the one who observes his word.

**R:** And we will come to him and we will make our home in him, alleluia.

# MONDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Jn. 2: 1-11*

*The new commandment.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. John, apostle.**

[1 John 2:1] My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

[1 John 2:2] and he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

[1 John 2:3] And by this we may be sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

[1 John 2:4] He who says "I know him" but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

[1 John 2:5] but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him:

[1 John 2:6] he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

[1 John 2:7] Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

[1 John 2:8] Yet I am writing you a new commandment, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

[1 John 2:9] He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still.

[1 John 2:10] He who loves his brother abides in the light, and in it there is no cause for stumbling.

[1 John 2:11] But he who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 13: 34; 1 Jn. 2: 10, 3*

**R:** I give you a new commandment: that you love one another. \* He who loves his brother, dwells in the light, alleluia.

**V:** From this we know that we have known Christ: if we observe his commandments.

**R:** He who loves his brother, dwells in the light, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Tratt. 1, 9-12*

*The brotherly love consists in the unity of charity.*

**A reading from the “Treatise on the first letter of John” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

“And in this,” says he, “we do know Him, if we keep His commandments.”” What commandments? Let us see whether this same commandment is not called love. Pay attention to the Gospel, “A new commandment,” says the Lord, “I give unto you, that you love one another. In this we know that we are in Him.” Perfected in love, he calls them: what is perfection of love? To love even enemies, and love them for this end, that they may be brethren; so love your enemies so that they may be called into your fellowship. For so loved He who, hanging on the cross, said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” For he did not say, Father let them live long, for indeed they kill, but let them live. He was casting out from them the death that is forever and ever, by His most merciful prayer, and by His most surpassing might. Many of them believed, and the shedding of the blood of Christ was forgiven them. At first they shed it while they raged; now they drank it while they believed. “In this we know that we are in Him, if his love is truly perfect in us. Touching the very perfection of love of enemies, the Lord admonishing, says, “Be perfect therefore, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.

“He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.” Who are they that take scandal or make scandal? They that are offended in Christ, and in the Church. Those therefore take scandal, or, occasion of failing, who forsake Christ or the Church. Whence do we understand that the Psalm in saying, “By day shall the sun not burn you, nor the moon by night,” said it of this, that the burning means scandal,

or occasion of stumbling? In the first place mark the similitude itself. Just as the person whom something is burning says, I cannot bear it, I cannot, away with it, and draws back; so those persons who cannot bear some things in the Church, and withdraw themselves either from the name of Christ or from the Church, are taking scandal. For see how those took scandal as from the sun, those carnal ones to whom Christ preached of His flesh, saying, "He who does not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and does not drink His blood, shall have no life in him." Some seventy persons said, "This is a hard saying," and left Him, and there remained the twelve. All those the sun burnt, and they went back, not being able to bear the force of the Word. There remained therefore the twelve. And lest haply men should imagine that they confer a benefit upon Christ by believing in Christ, and not that he confers the benefit upon them; when the twelve were left, the Lord said to them, "Do you also want to go away?" That you may know that I am necessary to you, not you to me. But those whom the sun had not burnt, answered by the voice of Peter: "Lord, You have the word of eternal life; to whom shall we go?"

In what sense then is it, that there is no scandal or occasion of stumbling in him who loves his brother? Because he who loves his brother, bears all things for unity's sake; because it is in the unity of charity that brotherly love exists. Hear then what the Lord says: "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another." What is the Law but commandment? Moreover, how is it they do not take occasion of stumbling, but because they forbear one another? As Paul says, "Forbearing one another in love, striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace" (Ep. 4: 2-3). This is the law of Christ; listen in fact, again to how the Apostle recommends: "Carry the weights of one another, thus you will fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6: 2).

**Responsorial.** *Ez. 20: 19; Jn. 15: 10*

**R:** I am the Lord your God; walk according to my decrees. \* Observe my laws and put them into practise, alleluia.

**V:** If you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love, as I have observed the commandments of my Father and remain in his love.

**R:** Observe my laws and put them into practise, alleluia.



## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 21: 1-26*

*Journey to Jerusalem.*

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.**

[Acts 21:1] And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Pat'ara.

[Acts 21:2] And having found a ship crossing to Phoeni'cia, we went aboard, and set sail.

[Acts 21:3] When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo.

[Acts 21:4] And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

[Acts 21:5] And when our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way till we were outside the city; and kneeling down on the beach we prayed and bade one another farewell.

[Acts 21:6] Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

[Acts 21:7] When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolema'is; and we greeted the brethren and stayed with them for one day.

[Acts 21:8] On the morrow we departed and came to Caesare'a; and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

[Acts 21:9] And he had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

[Acts 21:10] While we were staying for some days, a prophet named Ag'abus came down from Judea.

[Acts 21:11] And coming to us he took Paul's girdle and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, `So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this girdle and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

[Acts 21:12] When we heard this, we and the people there begged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

[Acts 21:13] Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to

die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

[Acts 21:14] And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "The will of the Lord be done."

[Acts 21:15] After these days we made ready and went up to Jerusalem.

[Acts 21:16] And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

[Acts 21:17] When we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

[Acts 21:18] On the following day Paul went in with us to James; and all the elders were present.

[Acts 21:19] After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

[Acts 21:20] And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed; they are all zealous for the law,

[Acts 21:21] and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs.

[Acts 21:22] What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come.

[Acts 21:23] Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;

[Acts 21:24] take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you but that you yourself live in observance of the law.

[Acts 21:25] But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity."

[Acts 21:26] Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself with them and went into the temple, to give notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for every one of them.

**Responsorial.** *Act. 21: 12; Col. 1: 24*

**R:** I am ready not only to be tied, but also to die at Jerusalem \* for the name of the Lord Jesus, alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** I complete in my flesh what is lacking to the sufferings of Christ, in favour of his body that is the Church.

**R:** For the name of the Lord Jesus, alleluia, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Book 2, 12*

*The Holy Spirit renews us in baptism.*

**A reading from “The three books on the Trinity” of Didymus of Alexandria.**

Being God, the Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son, makes us new in baptism. He leads us back from ugliness to our former beauty, and fills us with his grace, so that we no longer have any capacity for the things that are not worthy of love. He frees us from sin and death; and from being earthy, made of dust and ashes, he makes us spiritual, sharers in the divine glory, sons and heirs of our God and Father, formed according to the image of the Son, his fellow heirs and his brothers, who will reign with him and share his glory. Instead of earth he gives us heaven, and in his liberality he grants us paradise. He gives us already greater honour than the angels, and in the divine waters of the font he quenches the fierce and unquenchable flame of hell.

Men are twice conceived, first of the body, secondly of the divine Spirit. The sacred writers have treated of this subject fully; I shall recall their names and outline the teaching of each.

John: ‘To all who received him, he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name; who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God’.

He is saying that all those who have believed in Christ have received power to become children of God, that is, of the Holy Spirit, and to gain kinship with God. To teach us that God who begets us is the Holy Spirit, Saint John added these words of Christ: Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God’.

In a visible way the font gives birth to our physical bodies through the ministry of the priests; and in a spiritual way through the ministry of angels the Spirit of God, who is not visible to any mind, baptizes our souls as well as our bodies into union with himself and gives them new birth.

When the Baptist said: 'He will baptise you in the Holy Spirit and fire', he was speaking literally, but also in accordance with the words 'of water and the Spirit'. Man's earthenware vessel needs first to be cleansed in water, then to be thoroughly hardened in the spiritual fire – 'God is a devouring fire'- and finally to be prepared and renewed by the Holy Spirit. For the fire of the Spirit is able also to wash him, and the water is able to fire him again in the furnace.

**Responsorial.** *Is. 44: 3, 5; Jn. 4: 14*

**R:** I will pour out water on the thirsty soil, streams on the dry ground. I will pour out my spirit on your descendants, \* and they shall grow like poplars by running streams, alleluia.

**V:** The water that I shall give will turn into a spring, welling up to eternal life,

**R:** and they shall grow like poplars by running streams, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 15: 26 – 16:4*

*The Spirit of truth will bear witness to me.*

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

[John 15:26] But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me;

[John 15:27] and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.

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[John 16:1] "I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away.

[John 16:2] They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

[John 16:3] And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me.

[John 16:4] But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them. "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

## TUESDAY

### CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Jn. 2: 12-17*

*He who does the will of God remains forever.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. John, apostle.**

[1 John 2:12] I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his sake.

[1 John 2:13] I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father.

[1 John 2:14] I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

[1 John 2:15] Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him.

[1 John 2:16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.

[1 John 2:17] And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever.

**Responsorial.** *1 Jn. 2: 17, 15*

**R:** The world with its concupiscence will pass away; \* but he who does the will of God will live forever, alleluia.

**V:** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him;

**R:** but he who does the will of God will live forever, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Tratt. 2, 8-14*

*He who does the will of God remains forever.*

**A reading from the treatise “On the first letter of John” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

How can we love God if we love the world? Let us prepare ourselves therefore, to be inhabited by charity. Two are the types of love, of the world

and of God: if the love of the world dwells in us, there is no place for the love of God. Let the love of the world come out and you will be inhabited by that of God; the better will take its place. You loved the world, you do not want to love it anymore; when you have purified your heart from the earthly love, you will draw the divine love; and already the charity, from which no evil can proceed, will begin to dwell. Listen now to the words of he who comes to purify. He will find the hearts of men like a field. But what will he find? If he finds a forest he will uproot it; if he finds a clean field, he will plant. Here he wants to plant a tree, that of charity. And which forest does he want to uproot? The love of the world. Listen to him: “Do not love the world, nor the things of the world! If anyone loves the world, the love of God is not in him” (1 Jn. 2: 15).

Do you want to have the love of God in order to be coheirs of the Son? Do not love the world. Exclude the perverse love of the world; in order to be filled with the love of God. You are a vase, but still full; empty what you have, in order to receive that which you do not have. Certainly, our brothers are already reborn from water and from the Spirit; and for how many years have we been reborn from water and from the Spirit! It is good for us not to love the world, so that the sacraments will not turn into our condemnation, instead of instruments of salvation. It is the support of salvation to possess charity in the root, to have the virtue of piety, not only the external form. The form is good and holy; but what value does it have, if it does not possess roots?

Let us not love the world, or the things of the world. In fact “all that is in the world is concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life” (1 Jn. 2: 16). Three are the concupiscence’s and on these three the Lord also is tempted by the devil. He was tempted with the desire of the flesh, when he said to him: “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread” (Mt. 4:3). But in what way did he repel the tempter and teach us soldiers how to fight? Pay attention to what he answers: “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out from the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4). He was tempted also with the concupiscence of the eyes, to perform a miracle, when he was told: “Throw yourself down because it is written: he will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone” (Mt. 4: 6). But Christ resisted the tempter.

In what way was the Lord tempted in the ambition? When he was transported on the top of a high mountain and he was told: “All these things I will give you, if, prostrating yourself, you will adore me” (Mt. 4: 9). He wanted to tempt the king of the ages with the ambition of an earthly kingdom; but the Lord who made heaven and earth, dominated the devil. What is there that is extraordinary in the fact that God overcomes the devil? But he answers the devil in order to teach you what you have to answer in the temptations: “It is written: you will adore the Lord your God, and to him only will you render cult” (Mt. 4: 10).

If you remember these things, you will not have the concupiscence of the world; if you do not have this, you will not be subjected either by the desire of the flesh, nor that of the eyes, nor the ambition of the world; and thus you will make place for the invasion of the charity to love God.

Listen to the Scriptures: “I have said: You are gods, you are all sons of the Most High” (Ps. 81: 6). Therefore if you want to be gods and sons of the Most High, “do not love either the world or the things of the world. The world with its concupiscence will pass; but he who does the will of God, remains forever” (1 Jn. 2: 15, 17), in the same way that God remains forever.

**Responsorial.** *1 Jn. 3: 14; Gal. 5: 14*

**R:** We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brothers. \* He who does not love remains in death, alleluia.

**V:** The entire law finds its fullness in only one precept: you will love your neighbour as yourself.

**R:** He who does not love remains in death, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 21: 27-39*

*The arrest of Paul at Jerusalem.*

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.**

[Acts 21:27] When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple, stirred up all the crowd, and laid hands on him,

[Acts 21:28] crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching men everywhere against the people and the law and this place; moreover he also brought Greeks into the temple, and he has defiled this holy place."

[Acts 21:29] For they had previously seen Troph'imus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

[Acts 21:30] Then all the city was aroused, and the people ran together; they seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.

[Acts 21:31] And as they were trying to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.

[Acts 21:32] He at once took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them; and when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

[Acts 21:33] Then the tribune came up and arrested him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done.

[Acts 21:34] Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another; and as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.

[Acts 21:35] And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd;

[Acts 21:36] for the mob of the people followed, crying, "Away with him!"

[Acts 21:37] As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" And he said, "Do you know Greek?"

[Acts 21:38] Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?"

[Acts 21:39] Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cili'cia, a citizen of no mean city; I beg you, let me speak to the people."

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 4: 11; Rm. 8: 36*

**R:** We who are alive are exposed to death because of Jesus. \* So that also the death of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. Alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** For your sake we are put to death all day long, we are treated like sheep to be slaughtered.



**R:** So that the death of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.  
Alleluia, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 73, 1-2*

*Let us give thanks for the divine donation.*

**A reading from the “Discourses” of St. Leo the Great, pope.**

Since the blessed and glorious Resurrection of our LORD Jesus Christ, whereby the Divine power in three days raised the true Temple of GOD, which the wickedness of the Jews had overthrown, the sacred forty days, dearly-beloved are to-day ended, which by most holy appointment were devoted to our most profitable instruction, so that, during the period that the LORD thus protracted the lingering of His bodily presence, our faith in the Resurrection might be fortified by needful proofs.

For Christ’s Death had much disturbed the disciples’ hearts, and a kind of torpor of distrust had crept over their grief-laden minds at His torture on the cross, at His giving up of the spirit, at His lifeless body’s burial. For, when the holy women, as the Gospel-story has revealed, brought word of the stone rolled away from the tomb, the sepulchre emptied of the body, and the angels bearing witness to the living LORD, their words seemed like ravings to the Apostles and other disciples. Which doubtfulness, the result of human weakness, the Spirit of Truth would most assuredly not have permitted to exist in His own preacher’s breasts, had not their trembling anxiety and careful hesitation laid the foundations of our faith.

It was our perplexities and our dangers that were provided for in the Apostles: it was ourselves who in these men were taught how to meet the cavilling of the ungodly and the arguments of earthly wisdom. We are instructed by their looking, we are taught by their hearings, we are convinced by their handlings. Let us give thanks to the Divine management and the holy Fathers’ necessary slowness of belief. Others doubted, that we might not doubt.

Those days, therefore, dearly beloved, which intervened between the Lord’s Resurrection and Ascension did not pass by in uneventful leisure, but great mysteries were ratified in them, deep truths revealed. In them the fear of awful death was removed, and the immortality not only of the soul but also of the flesh established. In them, through the Lord’s breathing upon them, the Holy Spirit is poured upon all the Apostles, and to the blessed

Apostle Peter beyond the rest the care of the Lord's flock is entrusted, in addition to the keys of the kingdom. Then it was that the Lord joined the two disciples as a companion on the way, and, to the sweeping away of all the clouds of our uncertainty, upbraided them with the slowness of their timorous hearts. Their enlightened hearts catch the flame of faith, and lukewarm as they have been, are made to burn while the Lord unfolds the Scriptures. In the breaking of bread also their eyes are opened as they eat with Him: how far more blessed is the opening of their eyes, to whom the glorification of their nature is revealed than that of our first parents, on whom fell the disastrous consequences of their transgression.

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 16: 17; 20: 17*

**R:** In a little while you will see me no more, alleluia, alleluia; and then after a little while you will see me, \* because I go to the Father, alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** I am returning to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.

**R:** Because I go to the Father, alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 16: 5-11*

*If I do not go the Advocate will not come to you.*

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

[John 16:5] But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'

[John 16:6] But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts.

[John 16:7] Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

[John 16:8] And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

[John 16:9] concerning sin, because they do not believe in me;

[John 16:10] concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more;

[John 16:11] concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.



# WEDNESDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Jn. 2: 18-29*

*The antichrist.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. John, apostle.**

[1 John 2:18] Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour.

[1 John 2:19] They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us.

[1 John 2:20] But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all know.

[1 John 2:21] I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and know that no lie is of the truth.

[1 John 2:22] Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

[1 John 2:23] No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also.

[1 John 2:24] Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father.

[1 John 2:25] And this is what he has promised us, eternal life.

[1 John 2:26] I write this to you about those who would deceive you;

[1 John 2:27] but the anointing which you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that any one should teach you; as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him.

[1 John 2:28] And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

[1 John 2:29] If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that every one who does right is born of him.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. 1 Jn. 2: 27; Jl. 2: 23; Is. 30: 20*

**R:** May the anointing of the Holy Spirit received from God remain in you. You do not need others to instruct you: \* his anointing teaches you everything, alleluia.

**V:** Rejoice, be glad in the Lord your God, because he will give you a master of justice:

**R:** his anointing teaches you everything, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Tratt. 3, 1-5*

*The final hour.*

**A reading from the “Treatise on the First Letter of John” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

“Beloved children, this is the final hour” (1 Jn. 2: 18). He calls them beloved children so that they may make haste to grow, it being the final hour. The age of the body does not depend on the will. No one grows in the body when he wants to, just as no one is born when he wants; where, instead, the birth depends on the will, from this depends also the growth. No one is born from water and from the Spirit, if he does not want. Therefore, if he wants he grows; if he wants he decreases. What does it mean to grow? To progress. What does it mean to decrease? To fail.

But so that no one may be lazy in progressing, listen: “Beloved children, this is the final hour”. Proceed, run, grow, because it is the final hour. This final hour is long, but it is the final one. The hour in fact signifies the time, because in the final ages our Lord Jesus Christ will come. But some will say: why is it the final age? How is it that it is the final hour? First the antichrist will certainly come, and then the day of judgement will come. John foresaw also this objection; and because he was not tranquil thinking that perhaps it was not the final hour, since the antichrist had not yet come, he says: “As you have heard that the antichrist has to come, even now many antichrists have appeared” (1 Jn. 2: 18).

Who does he call antichrist? He says in the words that follow: “They have come out from the midst of us, but they did not belong to us” (1 Jn. 2: 19). We cry therefore because of the fault, but we also listen to the consolation: “But they did not belong to us”. They have come out from our midst; but do not be sad: “they did not belong to us”. How does he prove this? “If they had been ours, they would have remained with us” (ivi).

Observe how many who have not belonged to us receive the sacraments together with us, they receive the baptism with us, they receive together with us that which the faithful know that they receive, the blessing, the Eucharist, and all that which is holy in the sacraments; they participate with us at the same altar; yet they do not belong to us. The temptations prove that they do not belong to us; when the temptations assail them, they fly out as if blown by the wind because they were not good grain. All these will be swept away, it is good to repeat this often, when the threshing floor of the Lord will begin to be sifted on the day of judgement: “They have come out from our midst, but they did not belong to us: if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us”.

“Now you have the anointing that you have received from the Holy One, and all of you have the science” (1 Jn. 2: 20), so that you may know yourselves. The spiritual anointing is the Holy Spirit himself, of which the visible anointing is sacrament. The Apostle says that all those who have received this anointing of Christ know the good and the wicked; nor do they need someone to teach them, because “his anointing teaches everything” (1 Jn. 2: 27).

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 17: 12, 13, 15, 14*

**R:** Father, while I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe, alleluia, \* but now I am coming to you: I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one, alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** I have given your word to them and the world has hated them.

**R:** but now I am coming to you: I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one, alleluia, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 21: 40 – 22: 21*

*Apology of Paul to the Jews.*

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.**

[Acts 21:40] And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people; and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying:

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[Acts 22:1] "Brethren and fathers, hear the defense which I now make before you."

[Acts 22:2] And when they heard that he addressed them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet. And he said:

[Acts 22:3] "I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cili'cia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gama'li-el, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are this day.

[Acts 22:4] I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,

[Acts 22:5] as the high priest and the whole council of elders bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brethren, and I journeyed to Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

[Acts 22:6] "As I made my journey and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me.

[Acts 22:7] And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'

[Acts 22:8] And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.'

[Acts 22:9] Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me.

[Acts 22:10] And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.'

[Acts 22:11] And when I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

[Acts 22:12] "And one Anani'as, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,

[Acts 22:13] came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And in that very hour I received my sight and saw him.

[Acts 22:14] And he said, `The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth;

[Acts 22:15] for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

[Acts 22:16] And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

[Acts 22:17] "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance

[Acts 22:18] and saw him saying to me, `Make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'

[Acts 22:19] And I said, `Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in thee.

[Acts 22:20] And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by and approving, and keeping the garments of those who killed him.'

[Acts 22:21] And he said to me, `Depart; for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Act. 22: 14, 15; Gal. 1: 15-16*

**R:** The God of our fathers has predestined me to know his will. \* I will be his witness in front of all men of what I have seen and heard, alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** God who set me apart from my birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles.

**R:** I will be his witness in front of all men of what I have seen and heard, alleluia, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 73, 4-5*

*The ascension of Christ is our exaltation.*

**A reading from the “Discourses” of St. Leo the Great, pope.**

Accordingly, dearly-beloved, throughout this time which elapsed between the Lord’s Resurrection and Ascension, God’s Providence had this in view, to teach and impress upon both the eyes and hearts of His own people that the Lord Jesus Christ might be acknowledged to have as truly risen, as He was truly born, suffered, and died. And hence the most blessed



Apostles and all the disciples, who had been both bewildered at His death on the cross and backward in believing His Resurrection, were so strengthened by the clearness of the truth that when the Lord entered the heights of heaven, not only were they affected with no sadness, but were even filled with great joy.

And truly great and unspeakable was their cause for joy, when in the sight of the holy multitude, above the dignity of all heavenly creatures, the Nature of mankind went up, to pass above the angels' ranks and to rise beyond the archangels' heights, and to have Its uplifting limited by no elevation until, received to sit with the Eternal Father, It should be associated on the throne with His glory, to Whose Nature It was united in the Son. Since then Christ's Ascension is our uplifting, and the hope of the Body is raised, whither the glory of the Head has gone before, let us exult, dearly beloved, with worthy joy and delight in the loyal paying of thanks. For to-day not only are we confirmed as possessors of paradise, but have also in Christ penetrated the heights of heaven, and have gained still greater things through Christ's unspeakable grace than we had lost through the devil's malice. For us, whom our virulent enemy had driven out from the bliss of our first abode, the Son of God has made members of Himself and placed at the right hand of the Father, with Whom He lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Ps. 56: 11; Ps. 18: 7*

**R:** The magnificence of the Lord has been exalted in the heavens: his beauty is above the clouds, \* his name will remain forever, alleluia.

**V:** He rises from one end of heaven and his course reaches the other end.

**R:** His name will remain forever, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 16: 12-15*

*The Spirit of truth will lead you to the complete truth.*

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

[John 16:12] "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

[John 16:13] When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

[John 16:14] He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

[John 16:15] All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

# THURSDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Jn. 3: 1-11*

*We are children of God.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. John, apostle.**

[1 John 3:1] See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

[1 John 3:2] Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

[1 John 3:3] And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

[1 John 3:4] Every one who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

[1 John 3:5] You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

[1 John 3:6] No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him.

[1 John 3:7] Little children, let no one deceive you. He who does right is righteous, as he is righteous.

[1 John 3:8] He who commits sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

[1 John 3:9] No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.

[1 John 3:10] By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother.

[1 John 3:11] For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

**Responsorial.** *1 Jn. 3: 1, 2*

**R:** How great is the love that the Father has lavished on us: we are called children of God, and that is what we are, alleluia.

**V:** When he will be manifested, we will be similar to him, because we will see him as he is.

**R:** We are called children of God, and that is what we are, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Tratt. 4,1*

*The anointing of the Holy Spirit.*

**A reading from the “Treatise on the first letter of John” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

Remember, brothers that the reading of yesterday finished with these words: “You do not need anyone to teach you, because his anointing will teach you everything” (1 Jn. 2: 27). I am certain that you remember all that I explained to you, because we speak to your ears and we are like farmers who take care of the tree from outside, but we cannot increase the growth, nor form the fruit; but he who created you, has redeemed you, he has called you and he dwells in you through faith and the Holy Spirit, if it is not he who speaks inside you, our words would be in vain. From what does this observation result? Many are those who listen, but not all are persuaded by that which is said; only those to whom God speaks in the heart are convinced. But he speaks in the heart to those who make place for him; and those who make place for him are those who do not leave space for the devil. This one, in fact, wants to live in the hearts of men, and he suggests all that which leads to perdition. But what does the Lord Jesus say? “The prince of this world will be thrown out” (Jn. 12: 31). From where will he be sent out? Perhaps from heaven and from the earth? Perhaps from the world? No, but from the hearts of the believers. Expelled the invader, the Redeemer will reign; because it was he who redeemed those whom he had created. The devil fights from outside, insinuating various temptations, but he in whom God speaks in the heart with that anointing of which we have heard, does not consent to him.

It “is truthful” says John; that anointing, that is the Holy Spirit of the Lord which instructs men, cannot lie. “And he does not lie. Therefore remain firm in him, as he teaches you. And now, children, remain in him, so that we may have faith when he will appear and we will not be put to shame by him at his coming” (1 Jn. 2: 27-28).

Attention, brothers: we believe in that Jesus whom we do not see.

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 16: 7. 13*

**R:** If I do not go away, the Consoler will not come to you; but when I have gone, I will send him to you; \* and when he will come, he will guide you to the entire truth, alleluia.

**V:** He will not speak on his own, he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

**R:** And when he will come, he will guide you to the entire truth, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 22: 22 – 23: 11*

*Paul in front of the Sanhedrin.*

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.**

[Acts 22:22] Up to this word they listened to him; then they lifted up their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he ought not to live."

[Acts 22:23] And as they cried out and waved their garments and threw dust into the air,

[Acts 22:24] the tribune commanded him to be brought into the barracks, and ordered him to be examined by scourging, to find out why they shouted thus against him.

[Acts 22:25] But when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen, and uncondemned?"

[Acts 22:26] When the centurion heard that, he went to the tribune and said to him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen."

[Acts 22:27] So the tribune came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes."

[Acts 22:28] The tribune answered, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum." Paul said, "But I was born a citizen."

[Acts 22:29] So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him instantly; and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.

[Acts 22:30] But on the morrow, desiring to know the real reason why the Jews accused him, he unbound him, and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.

## CHAPTE

R 23

[Acts 23:1] And Paul, looking intently at the council, said, "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience up to this day."

[Acts 23:2] And the high priest Anani'as commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.

[Acts 23:3] Then Paul said to him, "God shall strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?"

[Acts 23:4] Those who stood by said, "Would you revile God's high priest?"

[Acts 23:5] And Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, `You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

[Acts 23:6] But when Paul perceived that one part were Sad'ducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am on trial."

[Acts 23:7] And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sad'ducees; and the assembly was divided.

[Acts 23:8] For the Sad'ducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

[Acts 23:9] Then a great clamor arose; and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended, "We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?"

[Acts 23:10] And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them and bring him into the barracks.

[Acts 23:11] The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified about me at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also at Rome."

**Responsorial.** *Act. 23: 11; 26: 18*

**R:** The Lord says: Courage! As you have testified for me in Jerusalem, \* it is necessary that you bear witness for me also at Rome. Alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** So that they may receive the forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me,

**R:** it is necessary that you bear witness for me also at Rome. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** Cc. 5, 5-6, 2

*God has reconciled us through Christ  
and has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

**A reading from the “Commentary on the second letter to the Corinthians” of St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop.**

Those who possess the Spirit as their guarantee, and are rich in the hope of the resurrection, already have a hold on what is in store for them as if it had already come to be. ‘From now on’, they say, ‘we regard no one in the flesh. We are all spiritual men, and immune from the corruption of the flesh. For since the Only begotten shone upon us, we have been transformed into the Word who gives life to all things. Under the reign of sin we were weighed down by the chains of death; but now that righteousness in Christ has gained possession of us, we have shaken ourselves free from corruption’.

So no one any longer is in the flesh, that is to say, in the weakness of the flesh and thus rightly subject to corruption. So St. Paul continues: ‘Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer’. It is as if he had chosen to say: ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and in the flesh he endured death for the life of us all. It is in this form that we know him or rather from now on we no longer know him. For although he is still in the flesh, since on the third day he returned to life and is now with the Father in heaven, nevertheless we know him above the flesh; for being raised from the dead he will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God’.

So if in this way he became the pioneer of our life, we must of necessity follow in his footsteps and be regarded not so much in the flesh as above the flesh. St. Paul speaks with complete accuracy when he says: ‘If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold,

the new has come'. For we have been made righteous by faith in Christ, and the power of the curse has come to an end. He has trodden underfoot the power of death and returned to life for our sake; we have come to know the one who is truly God by nature, and pay him our worship in spirit and truth, since the Son is our mediator and gives to the world the Father's blessings from on high.

And so those are wise words of St. Paul: 'All is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself'. For the mystery of the Son's incarnation and his work of renewal is certainly not apart from the Father's will. It is through Christ that we have gained access to the Father; no one comes to the Father, as Christ said himself, except through him. Accordingly all is from God, who through Christ reconciled us and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

**Responsorial.** *Rom. 5: 11; Col. 1: 19-20*

**R:** We exult in God through our Lord Jesus, \* through whom we have now been granted reconciliation, alleluia.

**V:** In him the complete being of God, by God's own choice, came to dwell. God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself through him,

**R:** through whom we have now been granted reconciliation, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 16: 16-20*

*You will be afflicted but your affliction will turn to joy.*

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

[John 16:16] "A little while, and you will see me no more; again a little while, and you will see me."

[John 16:17] Some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that he says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?"

[John 16:18] They said, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We do not know what he means."

[John 16:19] Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him; so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'?"



[John 16:20] Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.

# FRIDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Jn. 3: 11 –17*

*Brotherly charity.*

**A reading from the First Letter of St. John, apostle.**

[1 John 3:11] For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

[1 John 3:12] and not be like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

[1 John 3:13] Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you.

[1 John 3:14] We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

[1 John 3:15] Any one who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

[1 John 3:16] By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

[1 John 3:17] But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

**Responsorial.** *1 Jn. 3: 16, 14*

**R:** From this have we known the love of God; he has given his life for us; \* we also must give the life for the brothers, alleluia.

**V:** We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brothers:

**R:** we also must give the life for the brothers, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Tratt. 4, 4-6*

*The life of a good Christian is all a holy desire.*

**A reading from the “Treatise on the first letter of John” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 Jn. 3: 1). What

advantage do those who are called children of God and who are not, have from the name when in them the reality does not correspond? How many have the name of guards, and sleep the entire night! In the same way many claim to be Christians, but in the facts they are not recognised as such, because they are not in the life and in the habits, in faith, in hope and in charity. The world is completely Christian and at the same time completely wicked; throughout the world the wicked are spread and everywhere there are pious people: but one does not know the other. "The reason why the world does not know us, is because it has not known him" (1 Jn. 3: 2). Our same Lord Jesus Christ walked down here and was the man- God, hidden in the weakness of the flesh. Why was he not recognised? Because he rebuked men for all their sins. They, loving the pleasures of sins, could not recognise God; loving that which the fever of the passions suggested to them, they insulted the doctor.

And us? We have already been born from him; but we are in hope. "Dearly beloved, he says, from this moment we are children of God". Already from now? What must we wait for then, if we are already children? Listen to what follows: "But that which we will be has not yet been revealed". Will we be something different as children of God? Listen: "We know however that when he will be made manifest, we will be similar to him, because we will see him as he is". What is it that has been promised to us? "We will be similar to him, because we will see him as he is" (1 Jn. 3: 2). The word has expressed itself as it could; the rest must be thought about in the heart. What are the revelations of the same John with regard to He who is, or what can we express to men who are so unequal to his greatness?

Let us turn therefore to that anointing that teaches us internally that which words cannot express and since now you cannot see, your commitment will be in desiring. The life of the good Christian is all one holy desire. That which he desires, he does not see as yet; but desiring it, dilates your capacity, in a way that you can be filled when you reach that which you will see. Therefore let us desire, brothers, because we must be filled.

Do you see how Paul dilates the capacity of his soul, in order to welcome with fullness that which is to come. He says in fact: "I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of the prize or that I have already

arrived to the perfection: brothers, I do not retain as yet that I have reached it” (Phil 3: 12, 13).

But then what do you do in this life, if you have not yet reached your desire? “This only I know: I forget the past and strain towards the future, I run towards the goal to win the prize that God calls us to receive up there” (Phil 3: 13- 14). He has therefore affirmed that he is straining forward and reaching out to the end with all of himself.

He felt incapable of welcoming “those things that the eye does not see, nor ear hear, that never enter into the heart of man” (1 Cor. 2: 9). This is our life, that we exercise ourselves in the desire. And we will be all the more vivified by this holy desire, the more we cut off our desires from the love of the world.

Let us dilate ourselves in Christ, so that we can fill ourselves when he comes: “We will be similar to him, because we will see him as he is”.

**Responsorial.** *Phil 3: 20- 21; Tit. 2: 12-13*

**R:** We await as our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. \* Who will transfigure our miserable bodies, in order to conform them to his glorious body, alleluia.

**V:** We live in this world with soberness, justice and piety, waiting for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God.

**R:** Who will transfigure our miserable bodies, in order to conform them to his glorious body, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 23: 12-35*

*Conspiracy of the Jews against Paul.*

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.**

[Acts 23:12] When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

[Acts 23:13] There were more than forty who made this conspiracy.

[Acts 23:14] And they went to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul.

[Acts 23:15] You therefore, along with the council, give notice now to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

[Acts 23:16] Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush; so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.

[Acts 23:17] And Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune; for he has something to tell him."

[Acts 23:18] So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you."

[Acts 23:19] The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?"

[Acts 23:20] And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him.

[Acts 23:21] But do not yield to them; for more than forty of their men lie in ambush for him, having bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you."

[Acts 23:22] So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of this."

[Acts 23:23] Then he called two of the centurions and said, "At the third hour of the night get ready two hundred soldiers with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesare'a.

[Acts 23:24] Also provide mounts for Paul to ride, and bring him safely to Felix the governor."

[Acts 23:25] And he wrote a letter to this effect:

[Acts 23:26] "Claudius Lys'ias to his Excellency the governor Felix, greeting.

[Acts 23:27] This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be killed by them, when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen.

[Acts 23:28] And desiring to know the charge on which they accused him, I brought him down to their council.

[Acts 23:29] I found that he was accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment.

[Acts 23:30] And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him."

[Acts 23:31] So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antip'atris.

[Acts 23:32] And on the morrow they returned to the barracks, leaving the horsemen to go on with him.

[Acts 23:33] When they came to Caesare'a and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him.

[Acts 23:34] On reading the letter, he asked to what province he belonged. When he learned that he was from Cili'cia

[Acts 23:35] he said, "I will hear you when your accusers arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.

**Responsorial.** *Mt. 10: 18, 19-20*

**R:** When you will be led in front of governors and kings, do not worry about what you have to say and how you to say it, \* because at that time you will be given what to say. Alleluia.

**V:** For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of the Father speaking through you.

**R:** Because at that time you will be given what to say. Alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 74, 3-4*

*I reserve for you more sublime things, I prepare for you greater things.*

**A reading from the "Discourses" of St. Leo the Great, pope.**

This Faith, increased by the Lord's Ascension and established by the gift of the Holy Spirit, was not terrified by bonds, imprisonments, banishments, hunger, fire, attacks by wild beasts, refined torments of cruel

persecutors. For this Faith throughout the world not only men, but even women, not only beardless boys, but even tender maids, fought to the shedding of their blood. This Faith cast out spirits, drove off sicknesses, raised the dead: and through it the blessed Apostles themselves also, who after being confirmed by so many miracles and instructed by so many discourses, had yet been panic-stricken by the horrors of the Lord's Passion and had not accepted the truth of His resurrection without hesitation, made such progress after the Lord's Ascension that everything which had previously filled them with fear was turned into joy. For they had lifted the whole contemplation of their mind to the Godhead of Him that sat at the Father's right hand, and were no longer hindered by the barrier of corporeal sight from directing their minds' gaze to That Which had never quitted the Father's side in descending to earth, and had not forsaken the disciples in ascending to heaven.

The Son of Man and Son of God, therefore, dearly-beloved, then attained a more excellent and holier fame, when He betook Himself back to the glory of the Father's Majesty, and in an ineffable manner began to be nearer to the Father in respect of His Godhead, after having become farther away in respect of His manhood. A better instructed faith then began to draw closer to a conception of the Son's equality with the Father without the necessity of handling the corporeal substance in Christ, whereby He is less than the Father, since, while the Nature of the glorified Body still remained the faith of believers was called upon to touch not with the hand of flesh, but with the spiritual understanding the Only-begotten, Who was equal with the Father. Hence comes that which the Lord said after His Resurrection, when Mary Magdalene, representing the Church, hastened to approach and touch Him: "Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father:" that is, I would not have you come to Me as to a human body, nor yet recognize Me by fleshly perceptions: I put you off for higher things, I prepare greater things for you: when I have ascended to My Father, then you shall handle Me more perfectly and truly, for you shall grasp what you cannot touch and believe what you cannot see. But when the disciples eyes followed the ascending Lord to heaven with upward gaze of earnest wonder, two angels stood by them in raiment shining with wondrous brightness, who also said, "You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing into heaven? This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven shall return as you saw Him going into heaven."

By which words all the sons of the Church were taught to believe that Jesus Christ will come visibly in the same Flesh wherewith He ascended, and not to doubt that all things are subjected to Him on Whom the ministry of angels had waited from the first beginning of His Birth. For, as an angel announced to the blessed Virgin that Christ should be conceived by the Holy Spirit, so the voice of heavenly beings sang of His being born of the Virgin also to the shepherds. As messengers from above were the first to attest His having risen from the dead, so the service of angels was employed to foretell His coming in very Flesh to judge the world, that we might understand what great powers will come with Him as Judge, when such great ones ministered to Him even in being judged.

**Responsorial.** *Act. 1: 11, 10*

**R:** Men of Galilee, why are you looking into the heavens? Alleluia. \* He will return one day in the same way in which you saw him going into heaven, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** And since they were staring into heaven while he went up, behold two men in white garments appeared to them and said:

**R:** He will return one day in the same way in which you saw him going into heaven, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 16: 20-23*

*No one can take away your joy.*

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

[John 16:20] Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.

[John 16:21] When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world.

[John 16:22] So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

[John 16:23] In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name.

**SATURDAY**



## CYCLE 1

### **First Reading.** *1 Jn. 3: 18-24*

*The commandment of faith and love.*

### **A reading from the First Letter of St. John, apostle.**

[1 John 3:18] Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.

[1 John 3:19] By this we shall know that we are of the truth, and reassure our hearts before him

[1 John 3:20] whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

[1 John 3:21] Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

[1 John 3:22] and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

[1 John 3:23] And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

[1 John 3:24] All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. 1 Jn. 3: 24; Sir. 1: 7, 8*

**R:** He who observes the commandments of God dwells in God and He in him, \* from the Spirit that He has given us we know that he dwells in us, alleluia.

**V:** The Lord has created wisdom in the Holy Spirit, he has diffused it on every mortal,

**R:** from the Spirit that he has given us we know that he dwells in us, alleluia.

### **Second Reading.** *Tratt. 5: 11-13*

*We do not love with words nor with the tongue, but with facts and in truth.*

**A reading from the “Treatise on the first Letter of John” of St. Augustine, bishop.**

“From this have we known love”. Here he speaks of the perfection of love, of that perfection that has been recommended to us: “From this have we known love: He has given his life for us; therefore we too must give the life for the brothers” (1 Jn. 3: 16). From here came the saying: Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep (cfr. Jn. 21: 16).

So that you may understand how he wanted him to feed his sheep, that is up to giving the life for them, he immediately added: “When you were young you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you will be old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go”. “This he said, adds the evangelist, in order to indicate with what type of death he would glorify God” (Jn. 21: 18-19). He taught him to whom he had said: “Feed my sheep” to give his life for his sheep.

Brothers, where does charity begin? Pay attention: you have heard where its perfection reaches, the Lord himself in the Gospel has presented us with the end and the way: “No one has a greater love than this: to give his life for his own friends” (Jn. 15: 13). In the Gospel, therefore, he revealed to us the perfection of charity, and here he recommends it to us. But you interrogate and ask yourselves: when can we have this charity? You do not want to despair too soon of yourself; perhaps in you charity has just been born, but is not yet perfect. Nourish it, so that it will not fail. But you could say to me: From what will I know it? We have heard in what consists its perfection, let us hear from where it draws its beginning:

“If anyone has riches in this world and seeing his brother in need closes his own heart to him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him?” (1 Jn. 3: 17). This is from where charity begins. If you are still not able to die for the brother, be disposed to give a part of your goods to the brother. But perhaps you will say: what do I care? Must I give my money so that he will not suffer destitution? If your conscience suggests these things to you, the love of the Father does not dwell in you. If the love of the Father does not dwell in you, you are not born from God. How can you glory in being Christian? You bear the name, but you do not possess the facts.

If instead the name is followed by the works, they may also call you pagan, but you with facts show yourself to be Christian. If you do not show yourself to be a Christian with facts, even if everyone calls you Christian, of what use is the name to you when the reality does not correspond to it? “If one has riches of this world and seeing his brother in necessity closes his

own heart to him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him? Children, let us not love only with words, nor with the tongue, but with facts and in the truth”: (1 Jn. 3: 17-18).

**Responsorial.** *1 Jn. 4: 20- 21; Mk. 12: 33*

**R:** How can he who does not love his own brother whom he sees, love God whom he does not see? \* This is the commandment that we have received from him: he who loves God, must also love his brother, alleluia.

**V:** To love the neighbour as oneself is worth more than all holocausts and sacrifices.

**R:** This is the commandment that we have received from him: he who loves God, must also love his brother, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 24: 1-27*

*Paul in front of the procurator Felix.*

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.**

[Acts 24:1] And after five days the high priest Anani'as came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertul'lus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul;

[Acts 24:2] and when he was called, Tertul'lus began to accuse him, saying: "Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your provision, most excellent Felix, reforms are introduced on behalf of this nation,

[Acts 24:3] in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude.

[Acts 24:4] But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly.

[Acts 24:5] For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

[Acts 24:6] He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him.

[Acts 24:8] By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him about everything of which we accuse him."

[Acts 24:9] The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all this was so.

[Acts 24:10] And when the governor had motioned to him to speak, Paul replied: "Realizing that for many years you have been judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense.

[Acts 24:11] As you may ascertain, it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem;

[Acts 24:12] and they did not find me disputing with any one or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues, or in the city.

[Acts 24:13] Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me.

[Acts 24:14] But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the law or written in the prophets,

[Acts 24:15] having a hope in God which these themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.

[Acts 24:16] So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men.

[Acts 24:17] Now after some years I came to bring to my nation alms and offerings.

[Acts 24:18] As I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia --

[Acts 24:19] they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, if they have anything against me.

[Acts 24:20] Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council,

[Acts 24:21] except this one thing which I cried out while standing among them, `With respect to the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you this day.'"

[Acts 24:22] But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, "When Lys'ias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case."

[Acts 24:23] Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but should have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.

[Acts 24:24] After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess; and he sent for Paul and heard him speak upon faith in Christ Jesus.

[Acts 24:25] And as he argued about justice and self-control and future judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity I will summon you."

[Acts 24:26] At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him.

[Acts 24:27] But when two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

**Responsorial.** *Lk. 21: 12-13; Mk. 13: 9*

**R:** They will lay their hands on you and they will persecute you, handing you over to the synagogues and to the prisons because of my name. \* This will give you the occasion to bear witness. Alleluia.

**V:** They will hand you over to the Sanhedrin, you will appear in front of governors and kings because of me.

**R:** This will give you the occasion to bear witness. Alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 74, 5*

*Through the way of love, we too can rise to Christ.*

**A reading from the "Discourses" of St. Leo the Great, pope.**

And so, dearly-beloved, let us rejoice with spiritual joy, and let us with gladness pay God worthy thanks and raise our hearts' eyes unimpeded to those heights where Christ is. Minds that have heard the call to be uplifted must not be pressed down by earthly affections, they that are fore-ordained to things eternal must not be taken up with the things that perish; they that have entered on the way of Truth must not be entangled in treacherous snares, and the faithful must so take their course through these temporal things as to remember that they are sojourning in the vale of this world, in

which, even though they meet with some attractions, they must not sinfully embrace them, but bravely pass through them.

For to this devotion the blessed Apostle Peter arouses us, and entreating us with that loving eagerness which he conceived for feeding Christ's sheep by the threefold profession of love for the Lord, says, "dearly-beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."

But for whom do fleshly pleasures wage war, if not for the devil, whose delight it is to fetter souls that strive after things above, with the enticements of corruptible good things, and to draw them away from those abodes from which he himself has been banished? Against his plots every believer must keep careful watch that he may crush his foe on the side whence the attack is made. And there is no more powerful weapon, dearly beloved, against the devil's wiles than kindly mercy and bounteous charity, by which every sin is either escaped or vanquished. But this lofty power is not attained until that which is opposed to it be overthrown. And what so hostile to mercy and works of charity as avarice from the root of which spring all evils? And unless it be destroyed by lack of nourishment, there must needs grow in the ground of that heart in which this evil weed has taken root, the thorns and briars of vices rather than any seed of true goodness.

Let us then, dearly-beloved, resist this pestilential evil and "follow after charity," without which no virtue can flourish, that by this path of love whereby Christ came down to us, we too may mount up to Him, to Whom with God the Father and the Holy Spirit is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Responsorial.** *1 Jn. 3: 16; 4: 19*

**R:** This is how we know what love is. \* Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, alleluia.

**V:** We love, because he has loved us first.

**R:** Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 16: 23-28*

*The Father loves you, because you have loved me and have believed.*

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

[John 16:23] In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name.

[John 16:24] Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

[John 16:25] "I have said this to you in figures; the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in figures but tell you plainly of the Father.

[John 16:26] In that day you will ask in my name; and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;

[John 16:27] for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from the Father.

[John 16:28] I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father."