

## WEEK 4

### SUNDAY

#### CYCLE 1

**First Reading** *Rm. 11: 25 – 36*

*All Israel will be saved.*

**A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans.**

Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may receive mercy. For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all.

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

**Responsorial** *Rm. 11: 33; Ps. 88: 3*

**R:** O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! \* How unsearchable are his judgements and how inscrutable his ways!

**V:** His grace remains forever, his faithfulness is established in the heavens.

**R:** How unsearchable are his judgements and how inscrutable his ways!

**Second Reading** *Disc. 11:1, 4, 6*

*Wisdom of God in the work of Redemption of the human race.*

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

Many, dearest brothers, fall into this doubt and being inexperienced they are put in crisis by this reasoning: why the Lord Jesus Christ, the power and wisdom of the Father, did not work the salvation of man simply through the divine power, with only one word, and instead humbled himself in the flesh and in human suffering? To his divine power and majesty, it would not have been difficult to crush the devil and free man from his slavery.

Many marvel because he did not destroy death with only one word, he who in the beginning created life with only one word; and how was it that he did not restore that which had gone into perdition, with the same authority with which he could have also created other things which did not as yet exist. What need was there for Christ our Lord to suffer such an atrocious passion, he who with his power only could have freed the human race? **Why was the incarnation, the course of life, the disgrace, the cross, the death and burial necessary for the redemption of man?**

We see, first of all, why he chose the cross, as in it he cancelled the sin of the world, destroyed death and triumphed over the devil. The **cross**, in the order of justice, is **inflicted only on the sinners**. We know how, both the divine law as well as the human one, destined the **guilty** and the **criminals** to the cross.

Through the work of the devil who acted through Judas, through the kings of the earth and the princes of the Jews who “conspired together against the Lord and against his Messiah” (Ps. 2: 2), Christ was condemned to death by Pilate, he was condemned though innocent, as the prophet says in the psalm: “they attack the life of the just and condemn innocent blood” (Ps. 93: 21).

He suffered patiently the insults and the blows, the crown of thorns, the scarlet garment and all the disgraces that we read of in the Gospel **Saturated with patience**, he bore everything though not being guilty of any fault, in order to reach “like a sheep led to the slaughter” (Ps. 43: 23) the cross. Meek, he suffered everything, while he could have thrown back the insult against his enemies. He bore the overbearing, says David, like a man whom

“no one helps” (Ps. 21: 12), while with his divine majesty he could have punished them. If in fact those who had come to take him, only because with a mild tone he had asked “who are you looking for?” (Jn. 18: 4), backed off and fell to the ground like dead men, what would have happened if he had wanted to rebuke them?

But he accomplished the mystery of the Cross, for which he had come into this world: thus **cancelling the manuscript of sin** and **defeating the power of the enemy** who was deceived **through the bait of the cross**; in this way, **without altering justice and the plan of God**, he **removed the prey from the devil**.

Behold, dearest brothers, the reason for which our Lord and Saviour wanted **to liberate** the human race from the power of the devil, not through power but **through humility**, not with violence but with **justice**: we therefore, on whom the divine majesty has lavished such great benefits without any previous merit of ours, collaborate as much as it is possible so that the grace of such a great love may not be a condemnation for us, but a benefit.

**Responsorial** *Is. 53: 4, 5; Lk. 24: 26*

**R:** He burdened himself with our sufferings, and he took on himself our pains; the punishment which gives us salvation has fallen on him; \* through his wounds we have been healed.

**V:** It was necessary that the Christ should bear these sufferings in order to enter into his glory:

**R:** through his wounds we have been healed.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading** *Gen. 27: 1 – 29*

*Isaac blesses Jacob.*

**A reading from the book of Genesis.**

When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son, and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the

field, and hunt game for me, and prepare for me savoury food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat; that I may bless you before I die."

Now Rebecca was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, Rebecca said to her son Jacob, "I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, 'Bring me game, and prepare for me savoury food, that I may eat it, and bless you before the LORD before I die.' Now therefore, my son, obey my word as I command you. Go to the flock, and fetch me two good kids, that I may prepare from them savoury food for your father, such as he loves; and you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies."

But Jacob said to Rebecca his mother, "Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him, and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing." His mother said to him, "Upon me be your curse, my son; only obey my word, and go, fetch them to me."

So he went and took them and brought them to his mother; and his mother prepared savoury food, such as his father loved. Then Rebecca took the best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son; and the skins of the kids she put upon his hands and upon the smooth part of his neck; and she gave the savoury food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. So he went in to his father, and said, "My father"; and he said, "Here I am; who are you, my son?" Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your first-born. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that you may bless me." But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God granted me success." Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. He said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He answered, "I am." Then he said, "Bring it to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you." So he brought it to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, my son." So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the

LORD has blessed! May God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be every one who curses you, and blessed be every one who blesses you!"

**Responsorial Rm. 9: 11, 12**

**R:** In order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls – God said: the older will serve the younger.

**V:** When they had not yet been born and had done nothing good or evil,

**R:** God said: the older will serve the younger.

**Second Reading Nm. 40 – 43**

*The Apostles went out to announce the coming of the kingdom of God.*

**A reading from the "Letter to the Corinthians" of St. Clement I, pope and martyr.**

These things therefore being manifest to us, and since we look into the depths of the divine knowledge, it behoves us to do all things in their proper order, which the Lord has commanded us to perform at stated times. He has enjoined offerings to be presented and service to be performed to Him, and that not thoughtlessly or irregularly, but at the appointed times and hours.

Where and by whom He desires these things to be done, He Himself has fixed by His own supreme will, in order that all things being piously done according to His good pleasure, may be acceptable unto Him. Those, therefore, who present their offerings at the appointed times, are accepted and blessed; for inasmuch as they follow the laws of the Lord, they sin not.

For his own peculiar services are assigned to the high priest, and their own proper place is prescribed to the priests, and their own special ministrations devolve on the Levites. The layman is bound by the laws that pertain to laymen.

Let every one of you, brethren, give thanks to God in his own order, living in all good conscience, with becoming gravity, and not going beyond the rule of the ministry prescribed to him.

Not in every place, brethren, are the daily sacrifices offered, or the peace offerings, or the sin-offerings and the trespass-offerings, but in Jerusalem only. And even there they are not offered in any place, but only at

the altar before the temple, that which is offered being first carefully examined by the high priest and the ministers already mentioned. Those, therefore, who do anything beyond that which is agreeable to His will, are punished with death.

You see, brethren, that the greater the knowledge that has been vouchsafed to us, the greater also is the danger to which we are exposed. The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ has done so from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Spirit, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits of their labours, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. Nor was this any new thing, since indeed many ages before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus said the Scripture in a certain place, “I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith.” (Is. 60: 17). And what wonder is it if those in Christ who were entrusted with such a duty by God, appointed those ministers before mentioned, when the blessed Moses also, “a faithful servant in all his house,” (Nm. 12: 7), noted down in the sacred books all the injunctions which were given him, and when the other prophets also followed him, bearing witness with one consent to the ordinances which he had appointed? For, when rivalry arose concerning the priesthood, and the tribes were contending among themselves as to which of them should be adorned with that glorious title, he commanded the twelve princes of the tribes to bring him their rods, each one being inscribed with the name of the tribe. And he took them and bound them together, and sealed them with the rings of the princes of the tribes, and laid them up in the tabernacle of witness on the table of God. And having shut the doors of the tabernacle, he sealed the keys, as he had done the rods, and said to them, Men and brethren, the tribe whose rod shall blossom has God chosen to fulfil the office of the priesthood, and to minister unto Him. And when the morning was come, he assembled all Israel, six hundred thousand men, and showed the seals to the princes of the tribes, and opened the tabernacle of witness, and brought forth the rods. And the rod of Aaron was found not only to

have blossomed, but to bear fruit upon it. What do you think, beloved? Did not Moses know beforehand that this would happen? Undoubtedly he knew; but he acted thus, that there might be no sedition in Israel, and that the name of the true and only God might be glorified; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Responsorial** *Jer. 6: 16; Pr. 22: 28*

**R:** Stop in the street and look: \* inform yourselves with regard to the paths of the past, where the good road is and take it.

**V:** Do not shift the ancient boundaries, placed by your fathers:

**R:** inform yourselves with regard to the paths of the past, where the good road is and take it.

YEAR A

**Gospel** *Mt. 5: 1 – 12*

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

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Third Reading Cc. 4: 1 – 3, 9**

*Christ proclaims the code of the kingdom of heaven.*

**A reading from the “Commentary on Matthew” of St. Hillary, bishop.**

Surrounded by such a great multitude of people, Jesus climbed the mountain and taught; he places himself that is at the height of the majesty of the Father, and from there he proclaims the precepts of the heavenly life. He could not have given us teachings of eternal life if he himself had not been inserted in eternity. “He opened his mouth and began to teach” (Mt. 5: 2 Vulg.). It would have certainly been quicker to say simply “he spoke”. But since he was established in the glory of the paternal majesty and he said “words of eternal life” (Jn. 6: 69), it appears immediately how his human voice had obeyed to the movement of the Spirit that spoke.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5: 3). Through example the Lord had taught that one should not search for the glory of human ambition, when he answered Satan: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone!” (Mt. 4: 10). And since he had already pre-announced through the prophets that he would choose a humble people who would fear his word (cfr. Is. 66: 2), he placed the principle of the perfect happiness in the humility of the spirit.

Therefore we must aspire to modest things, reminding ourselves that we are men, destined to possess the heavenly kingdom, but conscious of the miserable poverty of our origins, through which we have passed before reaching the fullness of the form of our body. That if we progress in hearing, seeing, acting it is because God gives us the strength.

Let no one think that he has something of his own, that is absolutely his own, but everything is lavished as a gift by the one same Father from the origins of the life up to the faculty of enjoying it.

And we, on the example of that excellent Father who has made us a gift of everything, must emulate the goodness that he has poured out on us: to be good with everyone and to consider common to all everything, without letting ourselves be corrupted by the magnificent pomp of the world, by the avidity of the riches or by the ambition of vainglory, but remaining subject to God.

Let us all unite ourselves in the communion of life by the love of a common life, appreciating the gift that the divine goodness, having called



us to existence, promises us for eternity: a gift of which we must merit the reward and the honour with the works of the present life.

In this way, with this humility of spirit, let us always remember God and attribute to him the things received and those even greater ones that are to be hoped for: and the kingdom of heaven will be ours.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of justice” (Mt. 5: 10). At the end those who have the soul that is disposed to suffer anything for Christ will be rewarded with the fullness of the beatitude: because he himself is justice. To the poor in spirit who have despised this world, to the social outcasts because of the loss of earthly goods or for other misfortunes, to those who have believed in the divine justice in spite of the malevolence of men, to the glorious martyrs witnesses of the promises of God, who have renounced to enjoy their own life in order to attest his eternity; to all those is reserved the kingdom and an abundant reward is promised in heaven.

**Responsorial** *Ps. 18: 9-10; 1 Jn. 2: 17*

**R:** The commands of the Lord are just, they bring joy to the heart; the commands of the Lord are limpid, they give light to the eyes, \* the fear of the Lord is pure, it lasts forever.

**V:** The world with its desires pass away,

**R:** the fear of the Lord is pure, it lasts forever.

YEAR B

**Gospel** *Mk. 1: 21 – 28*

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

And they went into Caper'na-um; and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even

the unclean spirits, and they obey him." And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

### **Third Reading** *Hom. 25, 1*

*He taught like one who had authority.*

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

"They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching" (Mk. 1: 21-22). Certainly it was logical that **the seriousness of the discourse disturbed them** and they felt themselves stunned by the sublimity of the precepts; but in truth the strength of the Master was so eloquent, that it **fascinated many** of them persuading them not to go away from him once the discourse was ended, because of the pleasure felt in listening to him. In fact, when he descended from the mountain, the listeners did not go away, but the entire mass followed him, his doctrine having inspired so much fascination in them.

But above all they **admired his power**. In fact he did not speak quoting the words of others, like the prophets and Moses, but in every word he showed himself to have the **authority**. After having quoted often the law, he would add: "But I tell you" (Mt. 5: 22); and, remembering the day of judgement, he **indicated himself as judge** both of the punishment and the reward. For this, it seemed logical that they **remained disturbed**. If the **scribes**, who had seen the power of the works, threw stones at him and **drove him away**, how was it possible that there, where his interior strength showed itself only with words, this did not create perplexity in them, even more since it had been pronounced at the beginning, even before he could tangibly manifest his power? Yet they did not suffer from it; when in fact man is upright and wise, he easily accepts the teaching of the truth. The **Pharisees** **remained annoyed** although the miracles proclaimed his power: these instead, just by listening to his word, submitted themselves to him and followed him. The evangelist says this expressly: "great crowds followed him" (Mt. 8: 1); not therefore some of the princes and the scribes, but all those in whom there was no malice and who had sincere hearts. In the whole gospel always runs this type of followers. When he spoke they listened in silence, without interrupting him or disturbing his discourse,

without tempting him or searching for the occasion to catch him in error as the Pharisees did; and when he had finished speaking they followed him full of admiration. I would like you to consider with me the prudence of the Lord, how he used different methods according to the utility of the hearers, passing from miracles to words, and immediately from words to miracles. In fact, before going up the mountain he healed many, so as to prepare the way for that which he had to say. And after having terminated this long discourse, he returned to the miracles, confirming the words with facts. Since in fact, "he taught like one who had authority" (Mk. 1: 22), so that this way of teaching would not sound like pomp or of showing off, he translated it immediately into works: he cured also sicknesses like one who has the power, so that seeing him fulfil in this way the miracles, they would not remain disturbed anymore by his teachings.

**Responsorial** *Bar. 3: 36-37, 38; Jn. 1: 1-2*

**R:** He is our God and no one else can be compared to him; he has scrutinized all the ways of wisdom and he has given it as a gift to Jacob his servant; \* for this he appeared on the earth and has lived among men.

**V:** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

**R:** For this he appeared on the earth and has lived among men

YEAR C

**Gospel** *Lk. 4: 21 – 30*

And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; and they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself; what we have heard you did at Caper'na-um, do here also in your own country.'" And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zar'ephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in

Israel in the time of the prophet Eli'sha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na'aman the Syrian."

When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But passing through the midst of them he went away.

**Third Reading Book 5, 5**

*Christ brought the good news to the poor of the whole earth.*

**A reading from the "Commentary on the prophet Isaiah" of St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop.**

Christ wanting to restore the world and lead all men back to the Father, to transform all things in better and to renew the face of the earth, assumed the condition of a servant (cfr. Phil 2: 7) – he the Lord of the universe – and announced the good news to the poor, affirming that he had been sent exactly for this.

By poor can be understood those who suffer in the total destitution, but also, as the scripture says, all those who do not possess hope and who in the world are without God.

Having come to Christ from paganism, enriched by the faith in him, they have achieved a divine treasure that has come from heaven, the preaching of the gospel of salvation, made participants in such a way of the kingdom of heaven and consorts of the saints, heirs of those goods that cannot be either imagined or asked for: "what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has ever entered into the heart of man; this God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2: 9).

Or perhaps here it is intended that to the poor in spirit has been given in the Christ the abundant ministry of the charisms. He calls those who have lost hearts, and weak and limp souls, those who are incapable of resisting the assaults of the temptations, so much subjected to the passions that they seem to be slaves. Yet it is exactly to these that he promises healing and help. Thus he gave sight to the blind (cfr. Is. 35: 3-5; 61: 1-3). In fact those who adore a creature and "say to a piece of wood: you are my father; and to a stone; you have generated me" (Jer. 2: 27) have certainly not known God. What are they if not blind in their hearts, without the divine light in order to

understand? To these the Father infuses the light of a true knowledge of God.

Called through faith, they have known; in fact, still more, they have been known by him. While they were children of the night and of the darkness, they have become children of the light. The day has risen to illuminate them, and the sun of justice has risen for them; the morning star has risen shining for them (cfr. 2Pet. 1:19). Nothing stops us from applying all this also to the brothers who have come from Judaism. They also were “poor”, “with broken hearts”, “like slaves” and “in the darkness”. But Christ came, and to Israel before the others he was announced with the beneficial and brilliant manifestations of his power. He proclaimed “the year of the mercy of the Lord” and the “day of salvation” (cfr. Is. 49:8; 61:1-2). Year of mercy was that in which Christ was crucified for us. Then truly we became dear to God the Father, and through Christ we have given fruit. He himself has taught us: “Truly, truly I say to you: if a grain of wheat does not fall to the ground and die, it remains alone; but if instead it dies, it produces much fruit” (Jn. 12:24).

To those who cried on Sion is offered in Christ the consolation, and the glory instead of ashes (cfr. Is. 61:3). They in fact stop crying, and begin to announce and preach the gospel of joy.

**Responsorial** *Is. 35:4, 5-6; Mt. 11:5*

**R:** Behold your God; he comes to save you; then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be opened; \* then the lame will leap like deer, and the tongues of the dumb will shout for joy.

**V:** The blind recover their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are healed, the deaf get back their hearing, the dead rise, the good news is preached to the poor;

**R:** then the lame will leap like deer, and the tongues of the dumb will shout for joy.

# MONDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading** *Rm. 12: 1-21*

*We are only one body in Christ.*

**A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans.**

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with **sober judgment**, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned him.

For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited.

Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for

it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Responsorial** *Rm. 12: 2, 1*

**R:** Transform yourselves renewing your minds \* in order to be able to discern the will of God, that which is good, pleasing to him and perfect.

**V:** I exhort you to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual cult

**R:** in order to be able to discern the will of God, that which is good, pleasing to him and perfect.

**Second Reading** *Book 9:1*

*In all the members of the Church a living sacrifice is continuously offered.*

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

“Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship” (Rm. 12: 1).

Paul exhorts the believers in Christ to offer their own bodies “as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God”. He calls it living sacrifice in as much as it bears in itself Christ who is the life: “We carry always and everywhere in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body” (2 Cor. 4: 10). He says **holy** because the Holy Spirit dwells in it; it is pleasing to God because it is **separated from vices and from sins**. All this then constitutes the act of spiritual worship worthy of God. Such a cult can be accounted for, demonstrating that it is legitimate to immolate such sacrifices to God. The same reason, if it is upright and honest, would refuse to offer rams, goats and calves to an incorporeal and immortal God. It is clear therefore that the living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God is exactly **an uncontaminated body**. And since in the Church the first sacrifice, after that of the Apostles, seems to be that of the martyrs, the second that of the virgins, the third that of those who observe **continence**, I think above all that it cannot be denied that also those who, though living **in the state of matrimony, with common accord abstain from**

every relationship in determined times dedicated to prayer, provided they then act with holiness and justice, offer their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God. Thus in all the members therefore is offered continuously the living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, which is the act of spiritual worship. And “do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rm. 12: 2).

Our mind renews itself by exercising itself in wisdom, with the meditation of the word of God and the spiritual intelligence of his laws; and the more it draws profit everyday from the Scripture, the more it penetrates into it, the more it renews itself. I do not know instead how a mind that is lazy in reading the sacred Scriptures and in the exercise of meditation, which permits us not only to understand that which we have read, but also to clarify it all the more and to communicate it to others, can renew itself.

And on the other hand, if the mind is not renewed in a profound knowledge and illuminated completely by the wisdom of God, it cannot understand clearly what the will of God is. Many times we happen to see it where it is not to be found at all. And this happens more frequently to those who do not worry about renewing the mind, and therefore deviate and err. And truly not anyone, but only a mind that is renewed and transformed to the image of God will be able to discover if all that which it does, thinks or says is the will of God; and to not do, think and to say anything that it does not see to be conformed to the will of God.

**Responsorial** *Heb. 10: 8, 11, 12, 14; Ps. 39: 7*

**R:** The sacrifices offered according to the Law can never eliminate sins. \* Christ, on the contrary, having offered one single sacrifice for sins, with a unique oblation has rendered perfect forever those who are sanctified.

**V:** Sacrifice and offering you do not want, O God, you have not asked for holocausts and victims.

**R:** Christ, on the contrary, having offered one single sacrifice for sins, with a unique oblation has rendered perfect forever those who are sanctified.



## CYCLE 2

**First Reading** *Gen. 27:30 – 45*

*Esau is replaced by Jacob.*

**A reading from the book of Genesis.**

As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He also prepared savoury food, and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me."

His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" He answered, "I am your son, your first-born, Esau." Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, "Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? -- yes, and he shall be blessed."

When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" But he said, "Your brother came with guile, and he has taken away your blessing."

Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright; and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." Then he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" Isaac answered Esau, "Behold, I have made him your lord, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?" Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father." And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Then Isaac his father answered him: "Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you break loose you shall break his yoke from your neck."

Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob." But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebecca; so she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; arise, flee

to Laban my brother in Haran, and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away; until your brother's anger turns away, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send, and fetch you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?"

**Responsorial** *Gen. 27: 33, 35; Rm. 9: 11, 12*

**R:** Isaac, in prey to an incredible stupor, exclaimed: "Your brother came and with guile has taken your blessing. \* I have blessed him and blessed he will remain.

**V:** Not by works but by the will of him who calls, it was said: The older will be subjected to the younger.

**R:** I have blessed him and blessed he will remain.

**Second Reading** *Nm. 44 – 45*

*The just will suffer persecution.*

**A reading from the "Letter to the Corinthians" of St. Clement I, pope and martyr.**

Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on account of the office of the episcopate. For this reason, therefore, inasmuch as they had obtained a perfect foreknowledge of this, they appointed those ministers already mentioned, and afterwards gave instructions, that when these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed them in their ministry. We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ in a humble, peaceable, and disinterested spirit, and have for a long time possessed the good opinion of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry. For our sin will not be small, if we eject from the episcopate those who have blamelessly and holily fulfilled its duties.

Blessed are those presbyters who, having finished their course before now, have obtained a fruitful and perfect departure from this world; for they have no fear lest any one deprive them of the place now appointed them. But we see that you have removed some men of excellent behaviour from the ministry, which they fulfilled blamelessly and with honour.

You are fond of contention, brethren, and full of zeal about things that do not pertain to salvation. Look carefully into the Scriptures, which are the

true utterances of the Holy Spirit. Observe that nothing of an unjust or counterfeit character is written in them.

There you will not find that the righteous were cast off by men who themselves were holy. The righteous was indeed persecuted, but only by the wicked. They were cast into prison, but only by the unholy; they were stoned, but only by transgressors; they were slain, but only by the accursed, and such as had conceived an unrighteous envy against them. Exposed to such sufferings, they endured them gloriously.

For what shall we say, brethren? Was Daniel cast into the den of lions by such as feared God? Were Ananias, and Azarias, and Mishael shut up in a furnace of fire by those who observed the great and glorious worship of the Most High? Far from us be such a thought! Who, then, were they that did such things? The hateful, and those full of all wickedness, were roused to such a pitch of fury, that they inflicted torture on those who served God with a holy and blameless purpose of heart, not knowing that the Most High is the Defender and Protector of all such as with a pure conscience venerate His all-excellent name; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

But they who with confidence endured these things are now heirs of glory and honour, and have been exalted and made illustrious by God in their memorial forever and ever. Amen.

**Responsorial** *Cfr. Ps. 132: 1*

**R:** Because of faithfulness to the covenant of the Lord and to the laws of the fathers, the saints persevere in fraternal love, \* since there was always only one Spirit and only one faith in them.

**V:** Look how good and how sweet it is for brothers to live together!

**R:** Since there was always only one Spirit and only one faith in them.

**Gospel** *Mk. 5: 1 – 20*

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

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Ger'asenes. And when he had come out of the boat, there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who lived among the tombs; and no one could bind him any more, even with a chain; for he had often been bound with fetters and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the fetters he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among

the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out, and bruising himself with stones.

And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped him; and crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." And he begged him eagerly not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged him, "Send us to the swine, let us enter them." So he gave them leave. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea. The herdsmen fled, and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened.

And they came to Jesus, and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their neighbourhood. And as he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. But he refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decap'olis how much Jesus had done for him; and all men marvelled.

# TUESDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading** *Rm. 13: 1 – 14*

*Various advice.*

**A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans.**

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

For rulers are not terrors to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due.

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far-gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But **put on**

the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

**Responsorial** *Rm. 13: 8; Gal. 5: 14*

**R:** Owe no one anything, except to love one another; \* for he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law.

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

**R:** For he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law.

**Second Reading** *Nm. 1- 2*

*Enchained for Jesus Christ, I hope to come and greet you.*

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

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which has obtained mercy, through the majesty of the Most High Father, and Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son; the Church which is beloved and enlightened by the will of Him that wills all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ our God, which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honour, worthy of the highest happiness, worthy of praise, worthy of obtaining her every desire, worthy of being deemed holy, and which presides over love, is named from Christ, and from the Father, which I also salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father: to those who are united, both according to the flesh and spirit, to every one of His commandments; who are filled inseparably with the grace of God, and are purified from every strange taint, I wish abundance of happiness unblameably, in Jesus Christ our God.

Through prayer to God I have obtained the privilege of seeing your most worthy faces, and have even been granted more than I requested; for I hope as a prisoner in Christ Jesus to salute you, if indeed it be the will of God that I be thought worthy of attaining unto the end. For the beginning has been well ordered, if I may obtain grace to cling to my lot without hindrance unto the end. For I am afraid of your love, lest it should do me an injury. For it is easy for you to accomplish what you please; but it is difficult for me to attain to God, if you spare me.

For it is not my desire to act towards you as a man-pleaser, but as pleasing God, even as also you please Him. For neither shall I ever have such another opportunity of attaining to God; nor will you, if you shall now be silent, ever be entitled to the honour of a better work. For if you are silent concerning me, I shall become God's; but if you show your love to my flesh, I shall again have to run my race. Pray, then, do not seek to confer any greater favour upon me than that I be sacrificed to God while the altar is still prepared; that, being gathered together in love, you may sing praise to the Father, through Christ Jesus, that God has deemed me, the bishop of Syria, worthy to be sent for from the east unto the west. It is good to set to the world for God, that I may rise again in Him.

**Responsorial** *Phil. 1: 21; Gal. 6: 14*

**R:** For me to live is Christ and to die a gain. \* As for me may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**V:** Through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

**R:** As for me may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading** *Gen. 28:10 – 29:14*

*Jacob's ladder.*

**A reading from the book of Genesis.**

Jacob left Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep.

And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and

descending on it! And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves.

Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you." Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I did not know it."

And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will give the tenth to you."

Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and lo, three flocks of sheep lying beside it; for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place upon the mouth of the well. Jacob said to, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran."

He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him." He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!" He said, "Behold, it is still high day, it is not time for the animals to be gathered together; water the sheep, and go, pasture them." But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them. Now when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of



Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and wept aloud. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebecca's son; and she ran and told her father. When Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things, and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month.

**Responsorial** *Gen. 28: 12, 16, 17*

**R:** Jacob had a dream: that there was a ladder that rested on the earth, while its top reached the heavens; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. \* Then he awoke from his sleep and said: Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.

**V:** This is really the house of God and the door of heaven!

**R:** Then he awoke from his sleep and said: Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it.

**Second Reading** *Nm. 46:2 – 47: 5; 48*

*We have only one unique vocation in Christ.*

**A reading from the “Letter to the Corinthians” of St. Clement I, pope and martyr.**

It is written: ‘Seek the company of the holy, for they who seek their company shall themselves be made holy’. And it says somewhere else. ‘With the innocent you shall be innocent, with the chosen you shall be chosen, with the wayward you shall be wayward (cfr. Ps. 17: 26). So let us take the innocent and the upright for our companions, for it is they who are God’s chosen ones. Why must there be all this quarrelling and bad blood, these feuds and dissensions among you? Have we not all the same God, and the same Christ? Is not the same Spirit of grace shed upon us all? Have we not all the same calling in Christ? Then why are we rending and tearing asunder the limbs of Christ, and fomenting discord against our own body? Why are we so lost to all sense and reason that we have forgotten our membership of one another?

Remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, ‘Woe to that man; it would have been a good thing for him if he had never been born, instead of upsetting one of my chosen ones. It would be better for him to be pitched into the sea with a millstone hung round him, than to lead a single one of my chosen astray’ (cfr. Lk. 17: 1-2). Your disunity, however, has led many astray; and yet, in spite of the discouragement and doubt it has sown in many minds and the distress it has brought upon us all, you still persist in your disaffection.

Read your letter from the blessed Apostle Paul again. What did he write to you in those early gospel days? How truly the things he said about himself and Cephas and Apollos were inspired by the Spirit! – for even at that time you had been setting up favourites of your own. Such partiality was perhaps less culpable in those days, for two of the men you favoured were apostles of the highest repute, and the third was one of whom they had themselves given their approval.

There must be no time lost in putting an end to this state of affairs. We must fall on our knees before the master and implore him with tears graciously to pardon us, and bring us back again into the honourable and virtuous way of brothers who love one another. For that is the gateway of righteousness, the open gate to life; as it is written, ‘Open to me the gate of righteousness, that I may go in and praise the Lord. this is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall come in by it’ (cfr. Ps. 117: 19). There are many gates standing open, but the gate of righteousness is the gate of Christ, where blessings are in store for every incomer who pursues the path of godliness and uprightness, and goes about his duties without seeking to create trouble. By all means let a man be a true believer, let him be capable of expounding the secrets of revelation, and a judicious assessor of what he hears, and a pattern of virtue in all his doings. But the higher his reputation stands, so much the more humble-minded he ought to be; and furthermore, his eyes should be fixed on the good of the whole community rather than on his own personal advantage.

**Responsorial** *1 Cor. 9: 19, 22; Job. 29: 15-16*

**R:** Though I am not a slave of any man, I have made myself the slave of everyone. For the weak I made myself weak. \* I made myself all things to all men, in order to save some of them.

**V:** I was eyes for the blind, and feet for the lame. Who but I was the father of the poor?

**R:** I made myself all things to all men, in order to save some of them.

**Gospel Mk. 5:21 – 43**

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

And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him; and he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Ja'irus by name; and seeing him, he fell at his feet, and besought him, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him.

And there was a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well." And immediately the haemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, "Who touched my garments?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had been done to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But ignoring what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. When they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, he saw a tumult, and people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you

make a tumult and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Tal'itha cu'mi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and walked (she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

# WEDNESDAY

## CYCLE 1

### **First Reading** *Rm. 14:1- 23*

*No one lives for himself.*

As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables.

Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand.

One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let every one be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it in honour of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honour of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honour of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So each of us shall give account of himself to God. Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for any one who thinks it unclean. If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. So do not let your good be spoken of as evil.

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building.

Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats; it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble.

The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God; happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves. But he who has doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

**Responsorial Rm. 14: 9, 8, 7**

**R:** Christ has died and has returned to life, in order to be the Lord of the dead and of the living. \* Whether we live, or whether we die, we are therefore of the Lord.

**V:** No one of us lives for himself and no one dies for himself; because if we live, we live for the Lord; if we die, we die for the Lord.

**R:** Whether we live, or whether we die, we are therefore of the Lord.

**Second Reading Nm. 3 – 4**

*Now, in chains, I learn not to desire anything.*

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

You have never deceived any one; you have taught others. Now I desire that those things may be confirmed by your conduct, which in your instructions you enjoin on others. Only request in my behalf both inward and outward strength, that I may not only speak, but truly will; and that I may not merely be called a Christian, but really be found to be one. For if I be truly found a Christian, I may also be called one, and be then deemed faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world. Nothing visible is eternal. “For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” For our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed in His glory. Christianity is not a thing of silence only, but also of manifest greatness.

I write to the Churches, and impress on them all, that I shall willingly die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech of you not to show an unseasonable good will towards me. Suffer me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather entice the wild beasts, that they may become my tomb, and may leave nothing of my body; so that when I have fallen asleep in death, I may be no trouble to any one. Then shall I truly be a disciple of Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body. Entreat Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be found a sacrifice to God.

I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments unto you. They were apostles; I am but a condemned man: they were free, while I am, even until now, a servant. But when I suffer, I shall be the freedman of Jesus, and shall rise again emancipated in Him. And now, being a prisoner, I learn not to desire anything worldly or vain.

**Responsorial** *Gal. 2: 19-20*

**R:** I am dead to the law in order to live for God. This life that I live in the flesh I live in the faith of the Son of God \* who has loved me and has given himself for me.

**V:** I am crucified with Christ: it is not I who live anymore, but Christ lives in me,

**R:** who has loved me and has given himself for me.

CYCLE 2

**First Reading** *Gen. 31: 1- 18*

*Jacob flees from Mesopotamia.*

Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying, "Jacob has taken all that was our father's; and from what was our father's he has gained all this wealth." And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him with favour as before. Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you."

So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was, and said to them, "I see that your father does not regard me with favour as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me.

You know that I have served your father with all my strength; yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages', then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages', then the entire flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.

In the mating season of the flock I lifted up my eyes, and saw in a dream that the he-goats which leaped upon the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled. Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob', and I said, 'Here I am!' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that leap upon the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth'."

Then Rachel and Leah answered him, "Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house? Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has been using up the money given for us.

All the property which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children; now then, do whatever God has said to you." So Jacob arose, and set his sons and his wives on camels; and he drove away all his cattle, all his livestock that he had gained, the cattle in his possession that he had acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac.

### **Responsorial** *Gen. 31: 11, 12, 13, 17*

**R:** The angel of the Lord said to Jacob in a dream: I have seen what Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and



made a vow to me. \* Now arise, go forth from this land and return to the land of your birth!

**V:** Then Jacob got up, loaded his sons and his wives on the camels, and left.

**R:** Now arise, go forth from this land and return to the land of your birth!

**Second Reading** *Nm. 49 – 50*

*He who has the charity of Christ, observes His commandments.*

**A reading from the “Letter to the Corinthians” of St. Clement I, pope and martyr.**

If there is true Christian love in a man, let him carry out the precepts of Christ. Who can describe the constraining power of a love for God? Its majesty and its beauty who can adequately express? No tongue can tell the heights to which love can lift us up. Love binds us fast to God. Love casts a veil over sins innumerable (1 Pet. 4: 8). There are no limits to love’s endurance, no end to its patience. Love is without servility, as it is without arrogance. Love knows of no divisions, promotes no discord; all the works of love are done in perfect fellowship. It was in love that all God’s chosen saints were made perfect; for without love nothing is pleasing to him. It was in love that the Lord drew us to himself; because of the love he bore us, our Lord Jesus Christ, at the will of God, gave his blood for us – his flesh for our flesh, his life for our lives.

See then, dear friends, what a great and wondrous thing love is. Its perfection is beyond all words. Who is fit to be called its possessor, but those whom God deems worthy? Let us beg and implore of his mercy that we may be purged of all earthly preferences for this man or that, and be faultless in love. Though every generation from Adam to the present day has passed from the earth, yet such of them as by God’s grace were perfected in love have their place now in the courts of the godly, and at the visitation of Christ’s kingdom they will be openly revealed. For it is written: ‘Go into your secret chambers for a very little while, till my rage and my fury pass away (Is. 26:20); and then I will remember a day of gladness, and raise you out of your graves’ (Ez. 37: 12).

My friends, if we keep God’s commandments in a true loving comradeship together, so that our sins may be forgiven for that love’s sake, we are blessed indeed. It is written: ‘Blessed are they whose iniquities are

forgiven, and over whose sins a veil is drawn; blessed is the man of whose sin the Lord takes no account, and on whose lips there is no deceit' (Ps. 31: 1-2). And this blessing was theirs who were chosen by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, to him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Responsorial** *1 Jn. 4: 16, 7*

**R:** We ourselves have put our faith in God's love towards us. \* Anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him.

**V:** Let us love one another, since love comes from God.

**R:** Anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him.

**Gospel** *Mk. 6:1- 6*

He went away from there and came to his own country; and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue; and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offence at him.

And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

# THURSDAY

## CYCLE 1

### **First Reading** *Rm. 15:1- 13*

*Everyone try to please the neighbour in good.*

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name"; and again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and further Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, he who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

### **Responsorial** *Rm. 15: 5-7*

**R:** May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus \* that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**V:** Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God;

**R:** that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Second Reading** Nm. 5 – 6

*Leave me to imitate the passion of my God.*

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

From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, I mean a band of soldiers, who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse. But I am the more instructed by their injuries to act as a disciple of Christ; “yet am I not thereby justified.” (1 Cor. 4: 4). May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily, and not deal with me as with some, whom, out of fear, they have not touched. But if they be unwilling to assail me, I will compel them to do so.

Pardon me in this: I know what is for my benefit. Now I begin to be a disciple. And let no one, of things visible or invisible, impede me from attaining to Jesus Christ.

Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let the tearings, breakings, and dislocations of bones; let the cutting off of members; let the shatterings of the whole body; and let all the dreadful torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ.

All the pleasures of the world, and all the kingdoms of this earth, shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth. “For what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?” Him I seek, who died for us: Him I desire, who rose again for our sake. This is the gain which is laid up for me.

Pardon me, brethren: do not hinder me from living, do not wish to keep me in a state of death; and while I desire to belong to God, do not give me over to the world. Suffer me to obtain pure light: when I have gone thither, I shall indeed be a man of God. Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God. If any one has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire, and let him have sympathy with me, as knowing how I am straitened.

**Responsorial** *Phil. 3: 7, 10, 8*

**R:** That which for me could have been a gain, I have considered as a loss for the sake of Christ, \* in order to know him, the power of his resurrection, the participation in his sufferings.

**V:** What is more I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things;

**R:** in order to know him, the power of his resurrection, the participation in his sufferings.

CYCLE 2

**First Reading** *Gen. 32:3 – 30*

*Jacob's fight.*

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Se'ir, the country of Edom, instructing them, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; and I have oxen, asses, flocks, menservants, and maidservants; and I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favour in your sight.'" And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him."

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies, thinking, "If Esau comes to the one company and destroys it, then the company which is left will escape."

And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do you good,' I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray you, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and slay us all,

the mothers with the children. But you did say, 'I will do you good, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'" So he lodged there that night, and took from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau, two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten he-asses.

These he delivered into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on before me, and put a space between drove and drove."

He instructed the foremost, "When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these before you?' then you shall say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present sent to my lord Esau; and moreover he is behind us.'"

He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, "You shall say the same thing to Esau when you meet him, and you shall say, 'Moreover your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he thought, "I may appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me."

So the present passed on before him; and he himself lodged that night in the camp. The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Tell me, I pray, your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peni'el, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved."

**Responsorial** *Gen. 32: 27, 30; 22: 17*

**R:** The angel of the Lord said to Jacob: "let me go, for the day is breaking". He answered: "I will not let you go, unless you bless me!" \* And he blessed

him.

**V:** I will bless you with every blessing and I will make your descendants numerous.

**R:** and he blessed him.

**Second Reading** *Nm. 51 – 53*

*O great charity!*

**A reading from the “Letter to the Corinthians” of St. Clement I, pope and martyr**

Let us therefore implore forgiveness for all those transgressions that through any suggestion of the adversary we have committed. And those who have been the leaders of sedition and disagreement ought to have respect to the common hope. For such as live in fear and love would rather that they themselves than their neighbours should be involved in suffering. And they prefer to bear blame themselves, rather than that the concord that has been well and piously handed down to us should suffer. For it is better that a man should acknowledge his transgressions than that he should harden his heart, as the hearts of those were hardened who stirred up sedition against Moses the servant of God, and whose condemnation was made manifest unto all. For they went down alive into Hades, (Nm. 16: 33) and death swallowed them up (Ps. 48: 15). Pharaoh with his army and all the princes of Egypt, and the chariots with their riders, were sunk in the depths of the Red Sea, and perished, for no other reason than that their foolish hearts were hardened, after so many signs and wonders had been wrought in the land of Egypt by Moses the servant of God.

The Lord, brethren, stands in need of nothing; and He desires nothing of any one, except that confession be made to Him. For, says the elect David, “I will confess unto the Lord; and that will please Him more than a young bullock that has horns and hoofs. Let the poor see it, and be glad.” (Ps. 68: 31-33). And again he says, “Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay your vows unto the Most High. And call upon Me in the day of your trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” (Ps. 49: 14-15). For “the sacrifice of God is a broken spirit.” (Ps. 50: 19).

You understand, beloved, you understand well the Sacred Scriptures, and you have looked very earnestly into the oracles of God. Call then these things to your remembrance. When Moses went up into the mount, and

abode there, with fasting and humiliation, forty days and forty nights, the Lord said unto him, “Moses, Moses, go down quickly from hence; for your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have committed iniquity. They have speedily departed from the way in which I commanded them to walk, and have made to themselves molten images.” (Deut. 9: 12). And the Lord said unto him, “I have spoken to you once and again, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: let Me destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make you a great and wonderful nation, and one much more numerous than this.” (Deut. 9: 13-14). But Moses said, “Far be it from You, Lord: pardon the sin of this people; else blot me also out of the book of the living.” (Ex. 32: 32). O marvellous love! O insuperable perfection! The servant speaks freely to his Lord, and asks forgiveness for the people, or begs that he himself might perish along with them.

**Responsorial** *Zec. 79; Mt. 6: 14*

**R:** Practise justice and faithfulness, \* exercise piety and mercy, each one towards his neighbour.

**V:** If you forgive men their faults, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

**R:** exercise piety and mercy, each one towards his neighbour.

**Gospel** *Mk. 6: 7 – 13*

And he called to him the twelve, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And he said to them, "Where you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. And if any place will not receive you and they refuse to hear you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet for a testimony against them." So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them.



# FRIDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading** *Rm. 15: 14 – 32*

*Ministry of Paul*

**A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans**

I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ, thus making it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on another man's foundation, but as it is written, "They shall see who have never been told of him, and they shall understand who have never heard of him." This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be sped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little. At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem with aid for the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem; they were pleased to do it, and indeed they are in debt to them, for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

When therefore I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been raised, I shall go on by way of you to Spain; and I know that when I come to you I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. I appeal to you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to

strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

**Responsorial** *Rm. 15: 15, 16; 1: 9*

**R:** I have been granted the grace from God of being a minister of Jesus Christ among the Gentiles, exercising the sacred office of the gospel of God, \* so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

**V:** To God the Father I render cult in my spirit announcing the gospel of his Son,

**R:** so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

**Second Reading** *Nm. 7 – 8*

*I live in the desire of dying.*

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

The prince of this world would fain carry me away, and corrupt my disposition towards God. Let none of you, therefore, who are in Rome help him; rather be on my side, that is, on the side of God. **Do not speak of Jesus Christ, and yet set your desires on the world.** Let not envy find a dwelling-place among you; nor even should I, when present with you, exhort you to it, do not be persuaded to listen to me, but rather give credit to those things that I now write to you. For though I am alive while I write to you, yet I am eager to die. My love has been crucified, and there is no fire in me desiring to be fed; but there is within me a water that lives and speaks, saying to me inwardly, Come to the Father. I have no delight in corruptible food, or in the

pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham; and I desire the drink of God, namely His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life.

I no longer wish to live after the manner of men, and my desire shall be fulfilled if you consent. Be willing, then, that you also may have your desires fulfilled. I entreat you in this brief letter; believe me. Jesus Christ will reveal these things to you, so that you shall know that I speak truly. He is the mouth altogether free from falsehood, by which the Father has truly spoken. Pray for me, that I may attain the object of my desire. I have not written to you according to the flesh, but according to the will of God.

If I shall suffer, you have wished well to me; but if I am rejected, you have hated me.

**Responsorial** *Col. 1: 24, 29*

**R:** Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, \* and I complete in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body which is the Church.

**V:** To this end I labour, struggling with all the energy he so powerfully works in me;

**R:** and I complete in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body which is the Church.

CYCLE 2

**First Reading** *Gen. 35:1-29*

*The last years of Jacob.*

**A reading from the book of Genesis.**

God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments; then let us arise and go up to Bethel, that I may

make there an altar to the God who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone."

So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak that was near Shechem.

And as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were round about them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, and there he built an altar, and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother. And Deb'orah, Rebecca's nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel; so the name of it was called Al'lon-bacuth.

God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So his name was called Israel.

And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring from you. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you."

Then God went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it. So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel. Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And when she was in her hard labour, the midwife said to her, "Fear not; for now you will have another son." And as her soul was departing (for she died), she called his name Ben-o'ni; but his father called his name Benjamin.

So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), and Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave; it is the pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there to this day. Israel journeyed on, and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. While Israel dwelt in that land Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard of it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob's first-born), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Is'sachar, and Zeb'ulun. The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and

Naph'tali. The sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram. And Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kir'iath-ar'ba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. Now the days of Isaac were a hundred and eighty years. And Isaac breathed his last; and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

**Responsorial** *Sir. 44: 23, 10*

**R:** God made the blessings of all men and the covenant rest on the head of Jacob; he confirmed him in his blessings. \* he conserved virtuous men, whose merits were not forgotten.

**V:** To him he gave the country in inheritance and divided it in various parts, assigning it to the twelve tribes.

**R:** he conserved virtuous men, whose merits were not forgotten.

**Second Reading** *Nm. 54 – 55*

*In fasting and humility pray to the Lord who sees everything.*

**A reading from the “Letter to the Corinthians” of St. Clement I, pope and martyr.**

Who then among you is noble-minded? Who compassionate? Who full of love? Let him declare, “If on my account sedition and disagreement and schisms have arisen, I will depart, I will go away wherever you desire, and I will do whatever the community commands; only let the flock of Christ live on terms of peace with the presbyters set over it.” He that acts thus shall procure to himself great glory in the Lord; and every place will welcome him. For “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” (Ps. 23: 1) These things they who live a godly life, that is worthy of God, both have done and always will do.

To bring forward some examples from among the heathen: Many kings and princes, in times of pestilence, when they had been instructed by an oracle, have given themselves up to death, in order that by their own blood they might deliver their fellow-citizens from destruction. Many have gone forth from their own cities, so that sedition might be brought to an end within them. We know many among ourselves who have given themselves up to bonds, in order that they might ransom others. Many, too, have surrendered themselves to slavery, that with the price that they received for

themselves, they might provide food for others. Many women also, being strengthened by the grace of God, have performed numerous manly exploits. The blessed Judith, when her city was besieged, asked of the elders permission to go forth into the camp of the strangers; and, exposing herself to danger, she went out for the love which she bore for her country and people then besieged; and the Lord delivered Holofernes into the hands of a woman.

Esther also, being perfect in faith, exposed herself to no less danger, in order to deliver the twelve tribes of Israel from impending destruction. For with fasting and humiliation she entreated the everlasting God, who sees all things; and He, perceiving the humility of her spirit, delivered the people for whose sake she had encountered peril.

**Responsorial** *Rm. 14: 19; Sir. 17: 12*

**R:** Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace \* and to mutual edification.

**V:** God gave to each one precepts with regard to the neighbour

**R:** and to mutual edification.

**Gospel** *Mk. 6: 14 – 29*

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

King Herod heard of it; for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the baptiser has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old."

But when Herod heard of it he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Hero'di-as, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. For John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Hero'di-as had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly.

But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee. For when Hero'di-as' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests;

and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will grant it." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." And she went out, and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the baptiser." And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard and gave orders to bring his head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

# SATURDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading** *Rm. 16: 1 - 27*

*Recommendations, greetings and doxology.*

**A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans.**

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cen'chre-ae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well.

Greet Prisca and Aq'uila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but also all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks; greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epae'netus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. Greet Mary, who has worked hard among you. Greet Androni'cus and Ju'nias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they are men of note among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.

Greet Amplia'tus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urba'nus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apel'les, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobu'lus.

Greet my kinsman Hero'dion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcis'sus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphae'na and Trypho'sa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, eminent in the Lord, also his mother and mine. Greet Asyn'critus, Phlegon, Hermes, Pat'robas, Hermas, and the brethren who are with them. Greet Philol'ogus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olym'pas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

I appeal to you, brethren, to take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, **in opposition to the doctrine** that you have been taught; **avoid them**. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering words they **deceive the hearts of the simple-minded**.

For while your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I would have you **wise as to what is good** and **guileless as to what is evil**;



then **the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosip'ater, my kinsmen. I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord. Ga'ius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Eras'tus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith -- to the only wise God be glory for evermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

**Responsorial** *Rm. 16: 19; Mt. 10: 16*

**R:** The fame of your obedience has reached everywhere; therefore I am full of joy over you. \* I want you to be wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil.

**V:** Be as cunning as serpents and simple as doves.

**R:** I want you to be wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil.

**Second Reading** *Nm. 9- 10*

*My spirit greets you, together with the love of the Churches.*

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

Remember in your prayers the Church in Syria, which now has God for its shepherd, instead of me. Jesus Christ alone will oversee it, and your love will also regard it. But as for me, I am ashamed to be counted one of them; for indeed I am not worthy, as being the very last of them, and one born out of due time. But I have obtained mercy to be somebody, if I shall attain to God.

My spirit salutes you, and the love of the Churches that have received me in the name of Jesus Christ, and not as a mere passer-by. For even those Churches that were not near to me in the way, I mean according to the flesh, have gone before me, city by city, to meet me.

Now I write these things to you from Smyrna by the Ephesians, who are deservedly most happy. There is also with me, along with many others, Crocus, one dearly beloved by me. As to those who have gone before me from Syria to Rome for the glory of God, I believe that you are acquainted with them; to whom, then, do you make known that I am at hand. For they are all worthy, both of God and of you; and it is becoming that you should refresh them in all things. I have written these things unto you, on the day before the ninth of the Kalends of September (that is, on the twenty-third day of August). Fare you well to the end, in the patience of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Responsorial** *1 Cor. 10: 33; 9: 23*

**R:** I try to please everybody in everything. \* For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

**V:** I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

**R:** For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

CYCLE 2

**First Reading** *Gen. 37: 2- 4, 12 – 36*

*Joseph is sold by his brothers.*

**A reading from the book of Genesis.**

This is the history of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought an ill report of them to their father.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves.

But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers, and with the flock; and bring me word again." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

And a man found him wandering in the fields; and the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" "I am seeking my brothers," he said, "tell me, I pray you, where they are pasturing the flock."

And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. They saw him afar off, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life."

And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; cast him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him" -- that he might rescue him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; and they took him and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty, there was no water in it. Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ish'maelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ish'maelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers heeded him.

Then Mid'ianite traders passed by; and they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ish'maelites for twenty shekels of silver; and they took Joseph to Egypt. When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he rent his clothes and returned to his brothers, and said, "The lad is gone; and I, where shall I go?"

Then they took Joseph's robe, and killed a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood; and they sent the long robe with sleeves and brought it to their father, and said, "This we have found; see now whether it is your son's robe or not."

And he recognized it, and said, "It is my son's robe; a wild beast has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." Then Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him. Meanwhile the Mid'ianites had sold him in Egypt to Pot'i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

**Responsorial** *Gen. 37: 18, 19, 20, 4*

**R:** The brothers, seeing Joseph from a distance, said to one another: Look, here comes the dreamer! \* Come, let us kill him and we shall see what shall become of his dreams.

**V:** His brothers, seeing that their father loved him more than all his sons, hated him and could not speak to him peaceably. For this they said:

**R:** Come, let us kill him and we shall see what shall become of his dreams.

**Second Reading** *Nm. 56: 1 – 8, 16; 57 – 58*

*Let us obey to His most holy and glorious name.*

**A reading from the “Letter to the Corinthians” of St. Clement I, pope and martyr.**

Let us then also pray for those who have fallen into any sin, that meekness and humility may be given to them, so that they may submit, not unto us, but to the will of God. For in this way they shall secure a fruitful and perfect remembrance from us, with sympathy for them, both in our prayers to God, and our mention of them to the saints. Let us receive correction, beloved, on account of which no one should feel displeased. Those exhortations by which we admonish one another are both good in themselves and highly profitable, for they tend to unite us to the will of God. For thus says the holy Word: “The Lord has severely chastened me, yet he has not given me over to death.” (Ps. 117: 18). “For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” (Pr. 3: 12).

“The righteous,” it says, “shall chasten me in mercy, and reprove me; but let not the oil of sinners perfume my head.” (Ps. 140: 5). And again he says, “Blessed is the man whom the Lord reproves, therefore do not reject the warning of the Almighty. For He causes sorrow, and again restores to gladness; He wounds, and His hands make whole” (Heb. 5: 17-18)

You see, beloved, that protection is afforded to those that are chastened of the Lord; for since God is good, He corrects us, that we may be admonished by His holy chastisement.

You therefore, who laid the foundation of this sedition, submit yourselves to the presbyters, and receive correction so as to repent, bending the knees of your hearts.

Learn to be subject, laying aside the proud and arrogant self-confidence of your tongue. For it is better for you that you should occupy a humble but honourable place in the flock of Christ, than that, being highly exalted, you should be cast out from the hope of His people. For thus speaks all-virtuous Wisdom: “Behold, I will bring forth to you the words of My Spirit, and I will teach you My speech. Since I called, and you did not hear; I held forth My words, and you regarded not, but set at naught My counsels, and yielded not at My reproofs; therefore I too will laugh at your destruction; yes, I will rejoice when ruin comes upon you, and when sudden confusion overtakes you, when overturning presents itself like a tempest, or when tribulation and oppression fall upon you.

For it shall come to pass, that when you call upon Me, I will not hear you; the wicked shall seek Me, and they shall not find Me. For they hated wisdom, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; nor would they listen to My counsels, but despised My reproofs. Wherefore they shall eat the fruits of their own way, and they shall be filled with their own ungodliness. Yes the disorientation of the inexperienced will kill them and the light heartedness of the fools will make them perish; but he who listens to me will live tranquilly and safe from the fear of evil” (Pr. 1: 23-32).

Let us obey therefore to his most holy and glorious name: let us flee thus from the threats uttered by Wisdom against the disobedient and let us dwell with trust in the shadow of the most sweet name of God. Accept our council and you will not repent. As it is true that God lives, and the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, faith and hope of the elect, so also those who fulfil immediately in assiduous humility and justice these commandments and precepts of God, will be numbered among the elect,

saved through Jesus Christ, who gives glory to God forever and ever.  
Amen.

**Responsorial** *1 Sam. 15: 22; Heb. 13: 17*

**R:** Does the Lord perhaps take pleasure in holocausts and sacrifices rather than obedience to the voice of the Lord? \* Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.

**V:** Obey your leaders and be subjected to them.

**R:** Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.

**Gospel** *Mk. 6: 30 – 34*

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

The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "**Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while.**" For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them. As he went ashore he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.