

WEEK 2

SUNDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading. *Dt. 18: 1 – 22*

The Levites. The true and false prophets.

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

[Deu 18:1] "The Levitical priests, that is, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings by fire to the LORD, and his rightful dues.

[Deu 18:2] They shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them.

[Deu 18:3] And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from those offering a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach.

[Deu 18:4] The first fruits of your grain, of your wine and of your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him.

[Deu 18:5] For the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand and minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.

[Deu 18:6] "And if a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel, where he lives -- and he may come when he desires -- to the place which the LORD will choose,

[Deu 18:7] then he may minister in the name of the LORD his God, like all his fellow-Levites who stand to minister there before the LORD.

[Deu 18:8] They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what he receives from the sale of his patrimony.

[Deu 18:9] "When you come into the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations.

[Deu 18:10] There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer,

[Deu 18:11] or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

[Deu 18:12] For whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD; and because of these abominable practices the LORD your God is driving them out before you.

[Deu 18:13] You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.

[Deu 18:14] For these nations, which you are about to dispossess, give heed to soothsayers and to diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you so to do.

[Deu 18:15] "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren -- him you shall heed --

[Deu 18:16] just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, or see this great fire any more, lest I die.'

[Deu 18:17] And the LORD said to me, 'They have rightly said all that they have spoken.

[Deu 18:18] I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

[Deu 18:19] And whoever will not give heed to my words which he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

[Deu 18:20] But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.'

[Deu 18:21] And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' --

[Deu 18:22] when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him.

Responsorial. *Deut. 18: 18; Lk. 20: 13; Jn. 6: 14*

R: I will raise up for them a prophet and I will put my words in his mouth;
* and he will tell them all that I will command him.

V: I will send my only Son, this is truly the prophet who has to come into the world;

R: and he will tell them all that I will command him.

Second Reading. *Book 3, chapter 3*

The mystery of Christ has been preached to us openly.

A reading from the "Commentary on the gospel of John" of St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop.

“I will raise up a prophet for them from the midst of their brothers and I will put my words in his mouth and he will tell them all that I will command him. If someone does not listen to the words that he will say in my name, I will ask an account of that person” (Deut. 18: 18 – 19). It can be said that Deuteronomy is almost a repetition and a summary of the books of Moses. Here again is pre-announced openly the mystery of Christ deliberately prefigured through divine revelation in the person of Moses: “The Lord your God will raise up for you, from amongst your brothers, a prophet like me” (Deut. 18: 15). Therefore the mediation of Moses, placed at the service of the people in order to manifest to them the divine decrees, was instituted in order to sustain the weakness of the men of that time. Bring back again the figure to the reality, and you will understand from these words that the mediator between God and men is the Christ, who, to him who is docile, lets himself be known - born for us from a woman - with a human voice the ineffable will of God the Father, known certainly to him alone in as much as he is the Son who proceeds from him, and in much as he is the divine Wisdom itself, who knows everything, even the depths of God.

We would not have been able to perceive with the eyes of the body the divine, ineffable, pure and simple glory of the divinity, that surpasses everything: “No man can see me and live” (Ex. 33: 20), it is written. Therefore it was necessary that the only-begotten Son of God had to conform himself to our fragility, redressing according to the ineffable disposition of providence this mortal body, and in this way he manifested to us the divine will of the Father, saying: “All that I have heard from the Father I have made known to you” (Jn. 15: 15) and again: “I have not spoken of my own, but the Father who sent me, himself has told me what I have to say and announce” (Jn. 12: 49).

Therefore we need to consider that if Moses, who manifested to the sons of Israel the divine decrees, is the type of the Christ, his mediation however was a service; that of Christ instead is a voluntary and mystic mediation, as one who draws from his own nature that of which he is the mediator, in that he belongs by nature both to humanity and to God the Father. The Christ, as it has been written, is the fulfilment of the law, the fullness of the law and the prophets.

Responsorial. *Mt. 8: 17; Is. 53: 4, 6*

R: He has taken our infirmities * and he has shouldered our pains.

V: The Lord made the iniquity of all of us fall on him.

R: and he has shouldered our pains.

CYCLE 2

First Reading. *Ex. 13: 17 – 14: 9*

The journey of the people up to the Red Sea.

A reading from the book of Exodus.

[Exo 13:17] When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest the people repent when they see war, and return to Egypt."

[Exo 13:18] But God led the people round by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.

[Exo 13:19] And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for Joseph had solemnly sworn the people of Israel, saying, "God will visit you; then you must carry my bones with you from here."

[Exo 13:20] And they moved on from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness.

[Exo 13:21] And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night;

[Exo 13:22] the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

CHAPTE

R 14

[Exo 14:1] Then the LORD said to Moses,

[Exo 14:2] "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-ha-hi'roth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Ba'al-ze'phon; you shall encamp over against it, by the sea.

[Exo 14:3] For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are entangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.'

[Exo 14:4] And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

[Exo 14:5] When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"

[Exo 14:6] So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him,

[Exo 14:7] and took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.

[Exo 14:8] And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly.

[Exo 14:9] The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-ha-hi'roth, in front of Ba'al-ze'phon.

Responsorial. *Cfr. Ps. 113: 1, 2; Ex. 13: 21*

R: When Israel came out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a foreign people, * Judah became his sanctuary, Israel the dominion of the Lord.

V: The Lord marched at their head with a column of cloud, to guide them on the way.

R: Judah became his sanctuary, Israel the dominion of the Lord.

Second Reading. *Disc. 5: 3 – 4*

Straight and narrow is the way that leads to life.

A reading from the “Discourses” of Origen, presbyter.

Let us see what God says to Moses and which way he orders him to choose. He says to him: “Command the Israelites to turn back and to camp in front of Pi- Achiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal- Zefon” (Ex. 14: 2).

You perhaps believed that the things shown by God were easy and pleasing, without difficulty and effort. The way of virtue is an ascent, a tiring ascent. It is not a descent, but a narrow and arduous climb. Listen, the Lord himself says in the Gospel: “ How small and narrow is the way that leads to life!” (Mt. 7: 11).

From here you can note that the gospel agrees with the Law. In the Law the way of virtue is shown as a tortuous climb. In the gospel it is written that the way that leads to life is small and narrow. Cannot the blind also see clearly that only one Spirit wrote the Law and the Gospels? The course to follow is therefore a tiring ascent, the ascension of a peak, or that leads to a peak. The ascent regards action, the peak is the faith.

It is therefore shown to us that a lot of difficulty and effort is found in the action and in the exercise of the faith. When we want to live according to God, we encounter many temptations and many obstacles in the faith.

Listen to what Pharaoh says observing these things: “They make a mistake”. For Pharaoh those who follow God make a mistake, because the way of wisdom is torturous, it presents many curves, many difficulties, and numerous ravines. Other than this, when you will proclaim that there is only one God, and at the same time will assert that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are only one God, does not all this seem obscure, difficult and complicated to the unbeliever? And all the more when you will say that the Lord of majesty has been crucified, and that the Son of man has descended from heaven, will not all this seem to be difficult and inexplicable? He who listens, if he does not have faith, says that the just make a mistake; but you remain firm, do not doubt this faith, recognising that God himself has shown you that way.

In fact it is not possible to walk along the way of life without running into the breakers of temptation. As the Apostle says: “ All those who want to live fully in Christ will be persecuted” (2 Tm. 3: 12).

For the one who searches for the perfect way it is better to die along the way, rather than not move in search of perfection.

Responsorial. *Heb. 10: 35 – 36; 12: 3*

R: Do not abandon your trust, to which a great reward is reserved. * You only need constancy, so that after having done the will of God you can reach the promise.

V: Do not tire yourselves losing heart.

R: You only need constancy, so that after having done the will of God you can reach the promise.

YEAR A

Gospel. Mt. 17: 1 – 9

His face shone like the sun.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

[Mat 17:1] And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart.

[Mat 17:2] And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light.

[Mat 17:3] And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Eli'jah, talking with him.

[Mat 17:4] And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah."

[Mat 17:5] He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

[Mat 17:6] When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe.

[Mat 17:7] But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear."

[Mat 17:8] And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

[Mat 17:9] And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead."

Third Reading. Disc. 51: 3 – 4, 8

The Law was given through Moses

Grace and truth come through Jesus Christ.

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

The Lord displays His glory, therefore, before chosen witnesses, and invests that bodily shape which He shared with others with such splendour, that His face was like the sun's brightness and His garments equalled the whiteness of snow.

And in this Transfiguration the foremost object was to remove the offence of the cross from the disciple's heart, and to prevent their faith

being disturbed by the humiliation of His voluntary Passion by revealing to them the excellence of His hidden dignity.

But with no less foresight, the foundation was laid of the Holy Church's hope, that the whole body of Christ might realize the character of the change which it would have to receive, and that the members might promise themselves a share in that honour which had already shone forth in their Head.

About which the Lord had Himself said, when He spoke of the majesty of His coming, "Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in their Father's Kingdom," whilst the blessed Apostle Paul bears witness to the self-same thing, and says: "for I reckon that the sufferings of this present moment are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed in us:" and again, "for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in GOD. For when Christ our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory."

But to confirm the Apostles and assist them to all knowledge, still further instruction was conveyed by that miracle. For Moses and Elias, that is the Law and the Prophets, appeared talking with the LORD; that in the presence of those five men might most truly be fulfilled what was said: "In two or three witnesses stands every word."

What more stable, what more steadfast than this word, in the proclamation of which the trumpet of the Old and of the New Testament joins, and the documentary evidence of the ancient witnesses combine with the teaching of the Gospel? For the pages of both covenants corroborate each other, and He Whom under the veil of mysteries the types that went before had promised, is displayed clearly and conspicuously by the splendour of the present glory. Because, as says the blessed John, "the Law was given through Moses: but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ," in Whom is fulfilled both the promise of prophetic figures and the purpose of the legal ordinances: for He both teaches the truth of prophecy by His presence, and renders the commands possible through grace.

Let all men's faith then be established, according to the preaching of the most holy Gospel, and let no one be ashamed of Christ's cross, through which the world was redeemed. And let not any one fear to suffer for righteousness' sake, or doubt of the fulfilment of the promises, for this reason, that through toil we pass to rest and through death to life; since all the weakness of our humility was assumed by Him, in Whom, if we abide

in the acknowledgment and love of Him, we conquer as He conquered, and receive what he promised, because, whether to the performance of His commands or to the endurance of adversities, the Father's fore-announcing voice should always be sounding in our ears, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him:" Who lives and reigns, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Responsorial. *Cfr. Heb. 12: 22, 24, 25; Ps. 94: 8*

R: You have drawn near to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant. Be careful not to refuse He who speaks. * If the Hebrews, did not escape for having refused the one who pronounced oracles on the earth, even less will we escape, if we turn our backs on He who speaks from heaven.

V: Listen today to his voice: do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on the day of Massah in the desert.

R: If the Hebrews, did not escape for having refused the one who pronounced oracles on the earth, even less will we escape, if we turn our backs on He who speaks from heaven.

YEAR B

Gospel. *Mk. 9: 2 – 10*

This is my beloved Son.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Mark

[Mark 9:2] And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them,

[Mark 9:3] and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them.

[Mark 9:4] And there appeared to them Eli'jah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus.

[Mark 9:5] And Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah."

[Mark 9:6] For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid.

[Mark 9:7] And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."

[Mark 9:8] And suddenly looking around they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only.

[Mark 9:9] And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen from the dead.

[Mark 9:10] So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

Third Reading. *Disc. 9 on the Transfiguration*

They were speaking of the glory that Jesus himself would bring to fulfilment in Jerusalem.

A reading from the “Discourses” of St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop.

Jesus climbed up the mountain with the three chosen disciples; then he was transfigured in a splendour so extraordinary and divine, that his clothes were seen to shine like the light. Then Moses and Elijah were besides him, talking with him about the death that Jesus would have brought to fulfilment in Jerusalem (cfr. Lk. 9: 30 – 31), that is of the mystery of that salvation that would come about through his body, of that passion, I say, that would have been fulfilled on the cross. It is true in fact that the law of Moses and the words of the holy prophets pre-announce the mystery of Christ, the tables of the law describe him as an image and hidden; the prophets instead preach him in many places and in various ways, saying that at the opportune time he would appear in a human form and he would accept to die on the cross for the salvation and the life of everyone.

The fact then that Moses and Elijah were there and that they were speaking together, wants to indicate that the law and the prophets are like satellites of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by them were indicated as God, through those things that they had pre-announced and had agreed among themselves. In fact that which the prophets say is not contrary to the law: and of this, I think Moses and the greatest among the prophets, Elijah spoke of.

Having appeared, they did not keep silent, but spoke of the glory that Jesus himself would bring to fulfilment in Jerusalem; that is of his passion and of the cross, in which they also glimpsed the resurrection. Saint Peter,

then, believing that perhaps the time of the kingdom of God had already come, was glad to find himself on the mountain and therefore, without knowing what to say, wanted to construct three tents. But the end of the world had not yet arrived, nor can the future saints possess in this present time the things that are hoped for and promised. Saint Paul in fact says: “Christ will transfigure our miserable body in order to conform it to his glorious body” (Phil. 3: 21)

But his task then being at the beginning and not yet brought to its end, how could the Christ, who had come into the world out of love, not want to suffer anymore for it? He conserved in fact the same human nature, with which he would suffer death in his flesh and he would destroy it with his resurrection. For the rest, other than the marvellous and arcane vision of the glory of Christ, there is also another fact that is useful and necessary to confirm the faith not only of the disciples, but also ours. In fact the voice of God the Father is heard saying from above: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: listen to him” (Mt.17: 5).

Responsorial. *Lk. 9: 29 – 31*

R: While he prayed, his face changed aspect and his clothes became snow white and shining. * And behold two men were speaking with him: they were Moses and Elijah, appearing in their glory.

V: They were speaking of his death that he would have brought to fulfilment in Jerusalem.

R: And behold two men were speaking with him: they were Moses and Elijah, appearing in their glory.

YEAR C

Gospel. *Lk. 9: 28 – 36*

While Jesus prayed, his face changed aspect.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Luke

[Luke 9:28] Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.

[Luke 9:29] And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white.

[Luke 9:30] And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Eli'jah,

[Luke 9:31] who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.

[Luke 9:32] Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they wakened they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.

[Luke 9:33] And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah" -- not knowing what he said.

[Luke 9:34] As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

[Luke 9:35] And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"

[Luke 9:36] And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

Third Reading. Ps. 45, 2

He alone is the true and eternal light.

A reading from the "Commentary on the psalms" of St. Ambrose, bishop.

It was the Lord Jesus himself who wanted Moses alone to climb up the mountain to receive the law, and above all not without Jesus. In the gospel also we read that, among his disciples, he revealed the glory of his resurrection only to Peter, John and James. Thus he wanted that his mystery remained hidden, and he cautioned them frequently not to speak to anyone of that which they had seen, so that someone weaker, who was not capable of penetrating the strength of the sacred things because of his inconstant nature, would not be scandalized.

For the rest, Peter himself did not know what he was saying, believing that he had to prepare three tents for the Lord and for his servants. Therefore he could not resist the splendour of the transfigured Lord, but fell to the ground; and the sons of thunder James and John also fell to the ground, and a cloud covered them; and they were not able to stand up again

until Jesus came who, touching them, ordered them exhorting them to put aside all fear.

They entered into the cloud in order to know the hidden and secret things, and they heard the voice of God who said: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: listen to him” (Mt. 17: 5). What does “this is my beloved Son” mean? He wants to say: Do not deceive yourself, Simon, that it is possible to attribute the title of the Son of God to his servants. This is my Son: not of Moses, nor of Elijah, even though one of them had opened the sea and the other had closed the heavens. In the word of the Lord both of them overcame the elements of nature, but they were only instruments: he instead is the one who consolidates the waters, he who closes the heavens with drought, and when he wants he dissolves it with the rain.

When the witness of the resurrection is asked for, the ministry of the servants is consented, but when the glory of the risen Lord is manifested, then the splendour of the servants remains hidden. In fact that sun that rises covers the multitude of stars, and all their light disappears in front of the sun that illuminates the world.

How then could they still see the human stars under the eternal sun of justice and in the midst of that divine brightness? Where did those lights that by a miracle shone to our eyes go? They are all darkness, in comparison to the eternal light. Others hurry to please God with their own service: he alone is the true and eternal light in whom the Father is pleased. And I also am pleasing in him, as if whatever thing he had accomplished was mine, and that which I had done is justly believed to be the work of the Son. Listen to him while he says: “I and the Father are only one thing” (Jn. 10: 30) He does not say Moses and I are only one. He does not say that he and Elijah were participants of the same divine glory.

Why to prepare three tents? His tent is not on the earth, but in heaven. The Apostles heard and fell to the ground in fear. The Lord came, he made them stand up again, and he ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen.

Responsorial. *Mt. 17: 9, 7*

R: While they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus ordered them: * Do not speak to anyone of this vision, until after the Son of man has risen from the dead.

V: Jesus drew near, and touching the disciples who were overcome with great fear, said: Get up and do not fear. And he ordered them:

R: Do not speak to anyone of this vision, until after the Son of man has risen from the dead.

MONDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading. *Dt. 24: 1 – 25: 4*

The duties towards the neighbour.

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

[Deu 24:1] "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,

[Deu 24:2] and if she goes and becomes another man's wife,

[Deu 24:3] and the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife,

[Deu 24:4] then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance.

[Deu 24:5] "When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, to be happy with his wife whom he has taken.

[Deu 24:6] "No man shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge; for he would be taking a life in pledge.

[Deu 24:7] "If a man is found stealing one of his brethren, the people of Israel, and if he treats him as a slave or sells him, then that thief shall die; so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you.

[Deu 24:8] "Take heed, in an attack of leprosy, to be very careful to do according to all that the Levitical priests shall direct you; as I commanded them, so you shall be careful to do.

[Deu 24:9] Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way as you came forth out of Egypt.

[Deu 24:10] "When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not go into his house to fetch his pledge.

[Deu 24:11] You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you.

[Deu 24:12] And if he is a poor man, you shall not sleep in his pledge;

[Deu 24:13] when the sun goes down, you shall restore to him the pledge that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you; and it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God.

[Deu 24:14] "You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brethren or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns;

[Deu 24:15] you shall give him his hire on the day he earns it, before the sun goes down (for he is poor, and sets his heart upon it); lest he cry against you to the LORD, and it be sin in you.

[Deu 24:16] "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

[Deu 24:17] "You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge;

[Deu 24:18] but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.

[Deu 24:19] "When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

[Deu 24:20] When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

[Deu 24:21] When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

[Deu 24:22] You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

CHA

PTER 25

[Deu 25:1] "If there is a dispute between men, and they come into court, and the judges decide between them, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty,

[Deu 25:2] then if the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence with a number of

stripes in proportion to his offense.

[Deu 25:3] Forty stripes may be given him, but not more; lest, if one should go on to beat him with more stripes than these, your brother be degraded in your sight.

[Deu 25:4] "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.

Responsorial. *Mk. 12: 32 – 33; Sir. 35: 2 – 3*

R: Well said, Master, it is true, that God is the only one; *to love him with all the heart and to love the neighbour as oneself is worth more than all the holocausts and sacrifices.

V: He who practises almsgiving makes sacrifices of praise; to abstain from evil is a thing that is pleasing to the Lord.

R: To love him with all the heart and to love the neighbour as oneself is worth more than all the holocausts and sacrifices.

Second Reading. *N. 48*

The holiness of matrimony and the family.

A reading from the pastoral constitution “Gaudium et Spes” of the Second Vatican Council on the Church in the modern world.

Thus a man and a woman, who by their compact of conjugal love "are no longer two, but one flesh" (Matt. 19:3 ff), render mutual help and service to each other through an intimate union of their persons and of their actions. Through this union they experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day. As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union and the good of the children impose total fidelity on the spouses and argue for an unbreakable oneness between them.

Christ the Lord abundantly blessed this many-faceted love, welling up as it does from the fountain of divine love and structured as it is on the model of His union with His Church. For as God of old made Himself present to His people through a covenant of love and fidelity, so now the Saviour of men and the Spouse of the Church comes into the lives of married Christians through the sacrament of matrimony. He abides with them thereafter so that just as He loved the Church and handed Himself over on her behalf, the spouses may love each other with perpetual fidelity through mutual self-bestowal.

Authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ's redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church, so that this love may lead the spouses to God with powerful effect and may aid and strengthen them in sublime office of being a father or a mother. For this reason Christian spouses have a special sacrament by which they are fortified and receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state. By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfil their conjugal and family obligation, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ, which suffuses their whole lives with faith, hope and charity. Thus they increasingly advance the perfection of their own personalities, as well as their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God.

As a result, with their parents leading the way by example and family Prayer, children and indeed everyone gathered around the family hearth will find a readier path to human maturity, salvation and holiness. Graced with the dignity and office of fatherhood and motherhood, parents will energetically acquit themselves of a duty that devolves primarily on them, namely education and especially religious education.

As living members of the family, children contribute in their own way to making their parents holy. For they will respond to the kindness of their parents with sentiments of gratitude, with love and trust. They will stand by them as children should when hardships overtake their parents and old age brings its loneliness.

Responsorial. *Ep. 5: 32, 25, 33*

R: This is a great mystery; I say it of Christ and the Church. * Christ has loved the Church and has given himself for her.

V: Everyone on his part should love his own wife as himself, and the woman should be respectful towards her husband.

R: Christ has loved the Church and has given himself for her.

CYCLE 2

First Reading. *Ex. 14: 10 – 31*

The passage of the Red Sea.

A reading from the book of Exodus.

[Exo 14:10] When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were in great fear. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD;

[Exo 14:11] and they said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, in bringing us out of Egypt?"

[Exo 14:12] Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

[Exo 14:13] And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.

[Exo 14:14] The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be still."

[Exo 14:15] The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward.

[Exo 14:16] Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go on dry ground through the sea.

[Exo 14:17] And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen.

[Exo 14:18] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

[Exo 14:19] Then the angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them,

[Exo 14:20] coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night.

[Exo 14:21] Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry

land, and the waters were divided.

[Exo 14:22] And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

[Exo 14:23] The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

[Exo 14:24] And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians,

[Exo 14:25] clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel; for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

[Exo 14:26] Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen."

[Exo 14:27] So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its wonted flow when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled into it, and the LORD routed the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

[Exo 14:28] The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained.

[Exo 14:29] But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

[Exo 14:30] Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore.

[Exo 14:31] And Israel saw the great work which the LORD did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD; and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

Responsorial. *Cfr. Ex. 15: 1, 2, 3*

R: Let us sing to the Lord: he has done stupendous things; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea. * My strength and my song is the Lord: he has saved me.

V: The Lord is valiant in war, Omnipotent is his name.

R: My strength and my song is the Lord: he has saved me.

Second Reading. *Cat. 3: 24 – 27*

Moses and Christ.

A reading from the “Catechesis” of St. John Chrysostom, bishop.

The Jews saw miracles. You will see greater and more glorious miracles than those that accompanied the exodus of the Jews from Egypt. You did not see Pharaoh and his troops drowning; but you saw the devil and his armies overwhelmed by floodwaters. The Jews passed through the sea; you have passed through death. They were snatched from the grasp of the Egyptians; you from the grip of demons. The Jews cast off a foreign yoke; you the much more galling slavery of sin.

Shall I tell you of another way that has brought you greater honour than ever they had? Though Moses was their fellow slave and kinsman, the Jews could not bear to look upon his glorified face. But you have seen the face of Christ in his glory. These are the triumphant words of Paul, ‘And we all with unveiled faces reflect the glory of the Lord’.

At that time the Jews had Christ to follow them; but in a much truer sense Christ now follows us. Then the Lord walked at their side for the grace of Moses; now the Lord walks at your side not only because of the grace of Moses, but also because of your obedience. Once Egypt had been left behind, the desert awaited them; when your journey is over, heaven awaits you. Their guide, their famous leader, was Moses; our guide and famous leader is another Moses, God himself.

What was the mark of the former Moses? Scripture says, ‘Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all the men that were on the face of the earth’. We are not wrong to say that the mark of our Moses is the same. In Christ there is present the most meek and lovely Spirit in closest union, that Spirit that is of one substance with him. Then Moses would raise his hands to heaven and call down from there manna, that is the bread of angels. But our Moses now raises his hands to heaven, and brings us food that lasts forever. Moses struck the rock and released streams of water; our Moses lays his hand upon the table, he strikes the spiritual board and draws forth the fountains of the Spirit. In its centre there is as it were a fountain, so that the flocks come there from far and wide and are refreshed with its saving waters.

Such is the fountain that we have, this the wellspring of life, this the banquet table abounding with good things past numbering, which makes us strong with spiritual gifts. To it we must come with unfeigned heart and a

pure conscience, in order to win grace and pardon before it is too late. This grace and pardon is the gift of the only-begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Through him and with him be glory, honour and power to the Father and to the life-giving Spirit, now and always.

Responsorial. *Heb. 11: 24 – 25, 26 – 27*

R: It was by faith that Moses, when he grew to manhood, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter and chose to be ill-treated in company with God's people rather than to enjoy for a time the pleasures of sin, * because he had his eyes fixed on God's reward.

V: He reckoned that to suffer scorn for the Messiah was worth far more than all the treasures of Egypt; it was by faith that he left Egypt,

R: because he had his eyes fixed on God's reward.

Gospel. *Lk. 6: 36 – 38*

Pardon and you will be pardoned.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Luke

[Luke 6:36] Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

[Luke 6:37] "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;

[Luke 6:38] give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

TUESDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading. *Dt. 26: 1 – 19*

The profession of faith of the sons of Abraham.

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

[Deu 26:1] "When you come into the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance, and have taken possession of it, and live in it,

[Deu 26:2] you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God gives you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place which the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there.

[Deu 26:3] And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, 'I declare this day to the LORD your God that I have come into the land which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.'

[Deu 26:4] Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

[Deu 26:5] "And you shall make response before the LORD your God, 'A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous.

[Deu 26:6] And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage.

[Deu 26:7] Then we cried to the LORD the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression;

[Deu 26:8] and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders;

[Deu 26:9] and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

[Deu 26:10] And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O LORD, hast given me.' And you shall set it down before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God;

[Deu 26:11] and you shall rejoice in all the good which the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

[Deu 26:12] "When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within your towns and be filled,

[Deu 26:13] then you shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion out of my house, and moreover I have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all thy commandment which thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them;

[Deu 26:14] I have not eaten of the tithe while I was mourning, or removed any of it while I was unclean, or offered any of it to the dead; I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, I have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.

[Deu 26:15] Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel and the ground which thou hast given us, as thou didst swear to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.'

[Deu 26:16] "This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances; you shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul.

[Deu 26:17] You have declared this day concerning the LORD that he is your God, and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his ordinances, and will obey his voice;

[Deu 26:18] and the LORD has declared this day concerning you that you are a people for his own possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments,

[Deu 26:19] that he will set you high above all nations that he has made, in praise and in fame and in honor, and that you shall be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he has spoken."

Responsorial. *Cfr. 1 Pt. 2: 9, 10; Deut. 7: 7, 8*

R: You are the people that the Lord has acquired for himself, you who once were "No people", now instead you are the people of God. * You, once were excluded from mercy, now instead you have obtained mercy.

V: The Lord has chosen you, because he loves you, and he has ransomed you freeing you from slavery.

R: You, once were excluded from mercy, now instead you have obtained mercy.

Second Reading. Book 8

After Moses and the law, Christ has become our guide.

A reading from “The adoration in spirit and truth” of St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop.

In the Old Testament and in many ways the mystery of Christ is perfectly concealed for us, and in a certain way the Passion of the Lord is described, through which we have been freed from every evil that could shake us and that would have thrown us into irreparable miseries. The disposition that every seven years the remission of debts was done prefigured the time of the universal remission, and also the fact that the torture of the rod could not reach forty strokes (Deut. 25: 3) indicates to us the most desired time of salvation operated by that only begotten Son after he had assumed flesh, a time in which “through his wounds we have been healed”. “He has been crushed for our iniquities” (Is. 53: 5) when the Israelites covered him with insults and Pilate had him scourged, while we were liberated from the punishment and from the torture.

Once upon a time in fact the strokes of the whip given to the sinner were many, but Christ was scourged for us: as he died for all, so also he was scourged for all, having been put in the place of all of us.

The law therefore did not permit that the number of strokes exceeded forty, because until the coming of Christ the torments could not go beyond the measure: in a certain way it arrested it, and at the same time it pre-announced the time of remission. The figures in fact contained the beauty of the truth in germs.

It is necessary also to note that Israel, for having offended God, wandered for forty years in the desert: God had sworn that he would not introduce them into the promised land: but once this time had run its course his anger was placated, and their children crossed the Jordan and entered into that land, because his indignation had not surpassed the fortieth year. All this therefore was a clear figure of the fact that it was not possible to beat anyone more than the forty strokes; in fact to this number was bound the time of pardon, that the mystical passage of the Jordan would bring to us; and also to the stone knives, that is to the circumcision in the spirit, and

finally to the royal power of Jesus: in fact, after Moses and the law, Christ became our leader.

Responsorial. *Is. 53: 5; 1 Pt. 2: 24*

R: He has been pierced through for our crimes, crushed because of our iniquity; the punishment that gives us salvation has fallen on him. * Through his wounds we have been healed.

V: He bore our sins in his body on the wood of the cross, so that, not living anymore for sin, we could live for justice.

R: Through his wounds we have been healed.

CYCLE 2

First Reading. *Ex. 16: 1- 18. 35*

The manna rains in the desert.

A reading from the book of Exodus.

[Exo 16:1] They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt.

[Exo 16:2] And the whole congregation of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness,

[Exo 16:3] and said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

[Exo 16:4] Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or not.

[Exo 16:5] On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily."

[Exo 16:6] So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, "At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt,

[Exo 16:7] and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your murmurings against the LORD. For what are we, that you murmur against us?"

[Exo 16:8] And Moses said, "When the LORD gives you in the evening flesh to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your murmurings which you murmur against him -- what are we? Your murmurings are not against us but against the LORD."

[Exo 16:9] And Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your murmurings.'"

[Exo 16:10] And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

[Exo 16:11] And the LORD said to Moses,

[Exo 16:12] "I have heard the murmurings of the people of Israel; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

[Exo 16:13] In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning dew lay round about the camp.

[Exo 16:14] And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoarfrost on the ground.

[Exo 16:15] When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.

[Exo 16:16] This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Gather of it, every man of you, as much as he can eat; you shall take an omer apiece, according to the number of the persons whom each of you has in his tent.'"

[Exo 16:17] And the people of Israel did so; they gathered, some more, some less.

[Exo 16:18] But when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; each gathered according to what he could eat.

[Exo 16:35] And the people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land; they ate the manna, till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

Responsorial. *Wis. 16: 20; Jn. 6: 32*

R: You fed your people with the food of angels, from heaven you have offered them a bread that is already ready without effort, * full of every delight and pleasing to every taste.

V: It was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

R: full of every delight and pleasing to every taste.

Second Reading. *Ps. 140: 1 – 2*

The Passion of the entire Body of Christ.

A reading from the “Commentary on the psalms” of St. Augustine, bishop.

“Lord, to you I cry, hasten to my aid” (Ps. 140: 1). Everyone can say this. I do not say this, but rather the total Christ. But it was said of Christ especially in the person of the body, because while he was down here he prayed bearing our humanity, he prayed to the Father in the person of the body. While in fact he prayed, from his entire body dripped drops of blood, according to what we find in the gospel: Jesus prayed more intensely, and he sweated blood (cfr. Lk. 22: 44). What does this effusion of blood from his entire body signify, if not the passion that the entire Church continues to bear in his martyrs?

“Lord, to you I cry, hasten to my aid; listen to my voice when I invoke you” (Ps. 140: 1). Did you believe that the sorrow of crying was already terminated, when you said: “I cry to you” You have cried, yes, but do not believe yourself to be already safe. If the tribulation had passed definitely, there would be no more need to cry; but if the tribulation of the Church continues until the end of the world, do not say only: “I cry to you, hasten to my aid”, but you add: “listen to my voice, when I invoke you”.

“Like incense my prayer rises to you, my hands are raised like the evening sacrifice” (Ps. 140: 2).

Every Christian knows that this expression is attributed to the head himself. In fact towards the end of the evening the Lord gave up his spirit, which he would have later taken back again, on the cross. He did not in fact give up his spirit against his will. However we have been depicted also in this case.

What part of him hung on the cross, if not that which he had assumed from us? And then, how could it happen that in a given moment the Father

could leave and abandon his only Son, who is with him one unique God? Above all Christ, crucifying our weakness on the cross, in which, as the Apostle says, “our old man has been crucified with him” (Rm. 6: 6) cried out with the voice of our own humanity: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” (Ps. 21: 1)

This, therefore, is the evening sacrifice: the passion of the Lord, the cross of the Lord, the offering of the victim of salvation, the holocaust pleasing to God. And in his resurrection he changed that evening sacrifice into the morning offering. The uncontaminated prayer, therefore, that is raised up by a faithful heart, rises like incense from the holy altar.

Nothing is more pleasing than the perfume of the Lord. Of this sweet perfume all the faithful smell sweetly.

“Our old man, these are words of the Apostle, has been crucified with him, so that the body of sin could be destroyed, and we would not be slaves of sin anymore.

Responsorial. *Cfr. Gal. 2: 20*

R: I have been crucified with Christ, * it is not I who live anymore, but Christ lives in me.

V: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and has given himself for me;

R: it is not I who live anymore, but Christ lives in me.

Gospel. *Mt. 23: 1 – 12*

They say and don't do.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew

[Mat 23:1] Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples,

[Mat 23:2] "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat;

[Mat 23:3] so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice.

[Mat 23:4] They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger.

[Mat 23:5] They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,

[Mat 23:6] and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues,

[Mat 23:7] and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men.

[Mat 23:8] But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren.

[Mat 23:9] And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.

[Mat 23:10] Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ.

[Mat 23:11] He who is greatest among you shall be your servant;

[Mat 23:12] whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

WEDNESDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading. *Dt. 29: 1 – 5, 9 – 29 (vulg. 2 – 6; 10 – 29*

The curse on those who break the covenant.

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

[Deu 29:1] These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he had made with them at Horeb.

[Deu 29:2] And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land,

[Deu 29:3] the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders;

[Deu 29:4] but to this day the LORD has not given you a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear.

[Deu 29:5] I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes have not worn out upon you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet;

[Deu 29:9] Therefore be careful to do the words of this covenant, that you may prosper in all that you do.

[Deu 29:10] "You stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel,

[Deu 29:11] your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp, both he who hews your wood and he who draws your water,

[Deu 29:12] that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the LORD your God, which the LORD your God makes with you this day;

[Deu 29:13] that he may establish you this day as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

[Deu 29:14] Nor is it with you only that I make this sworn covenant,

[Deu 29:15] but with him who is not here with us this day as well as with him who stands here with us this day before the LORD our God.

[Deu 29:16] "You know how we dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed;

[Deu 29:17] and you have seen their detestable things, their idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, which were among them.

[Deu 29:18] Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away this day from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations; lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,

[Deu 29:19] one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.' This would lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.

[Deu 29:20] The LORD would not pardon him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy would smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book would settle upon him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven.

[Deu 29:21] And the LORD would single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this book of the law.

[Deu 29:22] And the generation to come, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the LORD has made it sick --

[Deu 29:23] the whole land brimstone and salt, and a burnt-out waste, unsown, and growing nothing, where no grass can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomor'rah, Admah and Zeboi'im, which the LORD overthrew in his anger and wrath --

[Deu 29:24] yea, all the nations would say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land? What means the heat of this great anger?'

[Deu 29:25] Then men would say, 'It is because they forsook the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt,

[Deu 29:26] and went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them;

[Deu 29:27] therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book;

[Deu 29:28] and the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as at this day.'

[Deu 29:29] "The secret things belong to the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Responsorial. *Cfr. Gal. 3: 13, 14; Deut. 8: 14*

R: Christ made himself a curse for us, so that the blessing of Abraham could pass to the nations, * so that we could receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

V: God has brought us out of Egypt, freeing us from slavery,

R: so that we could receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Second Reading. *Disc. 61: 3 – 5*

There where sin was abundant, grace was over abundant.

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

Where is a safe stronghold for the weak to find rest, if not in the wounds of our Saviour? There, safety is measured by his power to save. The world rages, the body weighs me down, the devil sets his snares, but I do not fall for I am founded on the solid rock. I have sinned grievously, my conscience will be troubled but not in despair for I will recall the wounds of the Lord. For indeed, ‘he was wounded for our transgressions’. What sin is so deadly that it cannot be absolved by the death of Christ? If then I call to mind such a powerful and efficacious remedy I can no longer be terrified by any disease no matter how virulent.

Hence, it is obvious that he who said, ‘My sin is too great to be forgiven’, was in error. Except that he did not belong to the members of Christ and had no share in the merits of Christ, so that he might lay title to and claim as his own what belonged to another, like a member laying claim to what belongs to the head.

For my part, what I lack of myself, I confidently take to myself from the compassionate heart of the Lord that flows with mercy and is provided with outlets through which mercy flows. They pierced his hands and feet and opened his side with a lance, and through these clefts I may ‘suck honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock’, which is to ‘taste and see that the Lord is good’.

His thoughts were thoughts of peace and I knew it not. 'Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?' But the nail that pierced became for me the key that opened the door so that I might see the will of the Lord. How should I not see through that opening? The nail cries out, the wound opens its mouth to cry that truly God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The iron passed through his soul and drew near to his heart that he might know how to feel for my weakness.

The secret of that heart is laid bare through the openings of the body; that great mystery of love lies open; revealed is the tender mercy of our God which has dawned on us from on high. Is it surprising that the heart should be laid bare through the wounds? Where, more clearly than in your wounds, does it shine out that you, Lord, are meek and humble and abounding in mercy? Greater pity no man has than to lay down his life for those bound over to death and under condemnation.

The mercy of the Lord is, then, my merit. I am never bereft of merit as long as he is not bereft of mercy. For if the mercies of the Lord are many, then many are my merits. But what if I am aware of my many sins? Then, where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. And if the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, then I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord forever. And what of my own righteousness? 'Lord, I shall be mindful only of your righteousness'. For your righteousness is also mine since you have been made my righteousness by God.

Responsorial. *Rm. 5: 10, 8*

R: If when we were enemies we have been reconciled with God through the death of his Son, * much more now that we have been reconciled, will we be saved through his life.

V: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

R: Much more now that we have been reconciled, will we be saved through his life

CYCLE 2

First Reading. *Ex. 17: 1 – 16.*

The water that gushes from the rock.

The battle against Amalek.

A reading from the book of Exodus.

[Exo 17:1] All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Reph'idim; but there was no water for the people to drink.

[Exo 17:2] Therefore the people found fault with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you find fault with me? Why do you put the LORD to the proof?"

[Exo 17:3] But the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses, and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"

[Exo 17:4] So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me."

[Exo 17:5] And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand the rod with which you struck the Nile, and go.

[Exo 17:6] Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

[Exo 17:7] And he called the name of the place Massah and Mer'ibah, because of the faultfinding of the children of Israel, and because they put the LORD to the proof by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

[Exo 17:8] Then came Am'alek and fought with Israel at Reph'idim.

[Exo 17:9] And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out, fight with Am'alek; tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand."

[Exo 17:10] So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Am'alek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

[Exo 17:11] Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and whenever he lowered his hand, Am'alek prevailed.

[Exo 17:12] But Moses' hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

[Exo 17:13] And Joshua mowed down Am'alek and his people with the edge of the sword.

[Exo 17:14] And the LORD said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the

remembrance of Am'alek from under heaven."

[Exo 17:15] And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The LORD is my banner,

[Exo 17:16] saying, "A hand upon the banner of the LORD! The LORD will have war with Am'alek from generation to generation."

Responsorial. *Is. 12: 3-4; cfr. Jn. 4: 14*

R: You will draw water with joy from the springs of salvation. In that day you will say: * Praise the Lord, invoke his name.

V: The water that I will give you will become in you springs that flow for eternal life.

R: Praise the Lord, invoke his name.

Second Reading. *Book 3*

The magnificent works of Christ.

A reading from “The adoration in spirit and truth” of St. Cyril of Alexandria, bishop.

Moses went up a hill or on the top of a high ground, in order to witness from there the battle and the fortunate exploits of Joshua in action. When Moses lifted his hands up to heaven, Israel was the stronger, when he lowered them, Israel failed and Amalek took the upper hand.

The hands stretched out to heaven are a clear figure of the cross. In reality not only all of Israel, but all those who believe it a great honour to conform themselves to Christ bearing his disgrace, that is his venerable cross, cannot in any way be overcome by the devil or by any other enemy greedy to destroy them.

It is then written that the hands of Moses were tired, and with effort he held them lifted up. Then “they took a stone, and they placed it under him and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur, one on one side and the other on the other side, held up his hands” (Ex. 17: 12). But it is Christ who is the stone who is “chosen, angular, precious, firmly founded” (Is. 28: 16) on which the most obedient and meekest of Israel rest stretching out their hands, that is taking up the cross: that small remnant according to the election of grace, that is confirmed and conserved by Christ, judge and priest, of whom Hur and Aaron were figures. Christ therefore is the unique judge and high priest,

who conserved through the salvation of the faith the remnant of Israel elected by grace. I believe that this is the meaning of the prophetic words of Isaiah: “ if the Lord of hosts had not left us a remnant, we would already be like Sodom, similar to Gomorrah” (Is. 1: 9). Therefore when Amalek, who offered resistance, fell, the Lord said: “Write this as a remembrance in the book and recite it in the hearing of Joshua” (Ex. 17: 14).

In fact that marvellous work of Christ had to be entrusted, as a continuous and eternal memorial, in the writings of the holy evangelists. The Lord therefore ordered that those writings be put in the hearing of Joshua, so that the gesture of those holy men, which was a gift of election, would be consecrated to the praise and proclamation of Christ. Having defeated and overcome Amalek, Moses raised up an altar to God and called it: “The Lord is my banner” (Ex. 17: 15). This also is a figure of Christ. He in fact has become Lord and banner for us, having defeated the prince of this world, he trampled underfoot the power of death and offered himself for us, as an immaculate sweet smelling host to God the Father. That altar therefore was a figure of Christ, to whom the title “my Lord, my banner” is given in truth.

Responsorial. *1 Pt. 2: 4, 5; Act. 4: 11*

R: Pressing yourselves close to the Lord, the living stone, * you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.

V: He is the stone that has become the corner stone.

R: You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.

Gospel. *Mt. 20: 17 – 28*

They will condemn him to death.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

[Mat 20:17] And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them,

[Mat 20:18] "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death,

[Mat 20:19] and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day."

[Mat 20:20] Then the mother of the sons of Zeb'edee came up to him, with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something.

[Mat 20:21] And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."

[Mat 20:22] But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able."

[Mat 20:23] He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

[Mat 20:24] And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.

[Mat 20:25] But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.

[Mat 20:26] It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant,

[Mat 20:27] and whoever would be first among you must be your slave;

[Mat 20:28] even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

THURSDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading. *Dt. 30: 1 – 20*

The promise of forgiveness after the exile.

"And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you this day, with all your heart and with all your soul, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes, and have compassion upon you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will fetch you; and the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, that you may possess it; and he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.

And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. And the LORD your God will put all these curses upon your foes and enemies who persecuted you. And you shall again obey the voice of the LORD, and keep all his commandments which I command you this day. The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your ground; for the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

"For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the

word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

"See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

Responsorial *Cf. Jer. 29: 13 – 14; Mt. 7: 7*

R: You will search for me and you will find me, says the Lord; if you search for me with all your heart, * I will let myself be found by you, and I will change your destiny for the better.

V: Search and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you.

R: I will let myself be found by you, and I will change your destiny for the better.

Second Reading *Disc. 7*

Love the Lord and walk in his ways

A reading from the “Discourses” of St. John the Mediocre, bishop

“The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom should I have fear”? (Ps. 26: 1). He was a great servant who knew how, from where and by whom he was illuminated. He saw the light, not this one that turns to sunset, but the light “that eye does not see” (1 Cor. 2: 9). The souls illuminated by this light do not fall into sin, do not run into vices. In fact the Lord said: “Walk while you have the light” (Jn.12: 35).

Of what light did he speak, if not of himself, he who said “I like the light have come into the world” (Jn. 12: 46), so that he who sees will not see, and the blind will receive the light? The Lord therefore is our light, the sun of justice that illuminates his Church spread throughout the world, and whom the prophet proclaimed: “The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom should I have fear?”

The man who is illuminated interiorly does not limp, does not go far away from the way, he tolerates everything. He who glimpses from far away the homeland is strong in adversity, is not saddened because of the temporal difficulties, but is established in God: if the heart is depressed he bears it and is patient because of his humility. This “true light that illuminates every man” (Jn. 1: 9) is given to those who fear him, he penetrates whom he wants and where he wants, he reveals himself to the one to whom the Son wants to reveal himself. (cf. Mt. 11: 27).

He who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, in the darkness of evil and in the shadow of sin, when the light rose was horrified of himself, re-entered into himself, repented, blushed with shame and said: “The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom should I have fear?”

Great, my brothers, is this salvation that does not fear the fragility, has no fear of tiredness, does not take into account pain. We must therefore proclaim with fullness and perfection, not only with the tongue, but also with the heart: “The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom should I have fear?” He illuminates, he saves: of what to be afraid? Let the darkness of temptations also come: the Lord is my light. They can come, but without fruit: they assail our hearts, but do not overcome them. Let the blindness of passions also come; “The Lord is my light”. Because he himself is our strength, he gives himself to us: let us also give ourselves to him. Run to the doctor while you still have the possibility, so that it may not be impossible when you want to.

Responsorial *cf. Wis. 9: 10, 4*

R: Send, Lord, the Wisdom from the holy heavens, to assist me and to be at my side in my trials, * and I will always know what is pleasing to you.

V: Give me the Wisdom that sits enthroned besides you.

R: and I will always know what is pleasing to you.

CYCLE 2

First Reading *Ex. 18: 13 – 27*

Moses constitutes judges over the people

On the morrow Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from morning till evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand about you from morning till evening?" And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the statutes of God and his decisions." Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you; you are not able to perform it alone. Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God, and bring their cases to God; and you shall teach them the statutes and the decisions, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. Moreover choose able men from all the people, such as fear God, men who are trustworthy and who hate a bribe; and place such men over the people as rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times; every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves; so it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.

If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."

So Moses gave heed to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he said. Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves. Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own country.

Responsorial *Cf. Nm. 11: 25; Ex. 18: 25*

R: The Lord descended in the cloud and spoke to Moses: he took some of the spirit that was on him and infused it on the seventy elders: * when the

spirit rested on them they spoke as prophets.

V: Moses chose capable men in all Israel and constituted them at the head of the people:

R: when the spirit rested on them they spoke as prophets.

Second Reading *Ps. 127: 1 – 3*

The true fear of the Lord

A reading from the “Treatise on the psalms” of St. Hillary, bishop

‘Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways’. Whenever Scripture speaks of the fear of the Lord, we notice that it is never mentioned on its own, as if fear could by itself bring our faith to perfection. Instead, much else is said either before or afterwards to help us to understand the principle of fearing the Lord, and how this fear can be made perfect. This we know from what Solomon says in the book of Proverbs, ‘If you would cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for a treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord’.

We see how many steps we must climb to come to fear the Lord. First, we must call wisdom to our side. We must hand over to our intellect the whole task of making choices. We must seek wisdom out and track her down. Then we shall understand what it is to fear the Lord. Certainly this is not how the ordinary run of men think about fear.

Fear is the trembling of human weakness frightened of suffering what we do not want to happen to us. This fear is caused in us and stirred by our consciousness of our guilt, or by the power of one stronger than ourselves, or the aggression of one too powerful for us; or it may be caused by sickness, or the attack of a wild animal, or the infliction of any evil.

This fear then is not taught but it comes from our human weakness. We do not learn what we ought to fear. Rather, the things we fear themselves instil their own dread in our minds.

But of the true fear of God we read, ‘Come, O sons, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord’. The fear of God, then, is something to be learnt, because it is taught. Its origins are found by way of teaching, and not in fright. We must find it by obeying commands, by doing the good deeds of a blameless life, and by coming to know the truth, and not in a moment of human terror.

All our fear of God is inspired by love; perfect love of God makes fear perfect. We show our love of God especially when we follow his advice, conform to his laws, and trust in his promises. We must follow the words of Scriptures: ‘And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him and keep his commandments with all your heart and with all your soul, that it may be well with you’.

Many indeed are the ways of the Lord, for he himself is the way. When he spoke of himself, he called himself the way, and he told us why he had done so in these words, ‘No one comes to the Father except by me’.

We must, then, examine many ways, and start out on many of them, so that we may find the one that is good, the way of eternal life, following the instructions of many different teachers. There are ways provided by the law, or the prophets, or the gospels, or the apostles. We find ways, too, in the various works of the commandments. Those who walk in such ways in the fear of God are blessed.

Responsorial *Cf. Sir. 2: 16; Lk. 1: 50*

R: Those who fear the Lord try to please him; *and those who love him fill themselves with his word.

V: His mercy extends from generation to generation on those who fear him;

R: and those who love him fill themselves with his word.

Gospel *Lk. 16: 19 – 31*

Jesus said: “There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Laz'arus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Laz'arus in his bosom. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Laz'arus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Laz'arus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between

us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

FRIDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading. *Dt. 31: 1 – 15, 23*

The last words of Moses.

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

[Deu 31:1] So Moses continued to speak these words to all Israel.

[Deu 31:2] And he said to them, "I am a hundred and twenty years old this day; I am no longer able to go out and come in. The LORD has said to me, 'You shall not go over this Jordan.'

[Deu 31:3] The LORD your God himself will go over before you; he will destroy these nations before you, so that you shall dispossess them; and Joshua will go over at your head, as the LORD has spoken.

[Deu 31:4] And the LORD will do to them as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he destroyed them.

[Deu 31:5] And the LORD will give them over to you, and you shall do to them according to all the commandment which I have commanded you.

[Deu 31:6] Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be in dread of them: for it is the LORD your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you."

[Deu 31:7] Then Moses summoned Joshua, and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them; and you shall put them in possession of it.

[Deu 31:8] It is the LORD who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you; do not fear or be dismayed."

[Deu 31:9] And Moses wrote this law, and gave it to the priests the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel.

[Deu 31:10] And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time of the year of release, at the feast of booths,

[Deu 31:11] when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

[Deu 31:12] Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law,

[Deu 31:13] and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess."

[Deu 31:14] And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may commission him." And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting.

[Deu 31:15] And the LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud; and the pillar of cloud stood by the door of the tent.

[Deu 31:23] And the LORD commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore to give them: I will be with you."

Responsorial. *Deut. 31: 7, 8; cfr. Pr. 3: 26*

R: Be strong and take courage, because the Lord himself will walk before you. * He will be with you, do not fear.

V: The Lord will be at your side, he will defend your steps from the snare.

R: He will be with you, do not fear.

Second Reading. *Ps. 101*

The prodigies of God.

A reading from the "Commentary on the psalms" of St. John Fisher, bishop and martyr.

God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt most miraculously with very many mysterious signs and wonders. He caused them to pass on foot, dry shod, through the Red Sea; he sent down from heaven the food of angels and also wild fowl, curlews or quails; he caused water to flow out of the hard rock for their refreshment; gave them victory over all their enemies; caused the river Jordan to leave its natural course and turn backwards; divided and shared out the promised land according to the number of the tribes and races of Israel, as many as were destined to have possession. Very often he had mercy on them after they had committed idolatry. He also called us to grace, although we were Gentiles by nature,

and grafted us on the true olive tree of faith, allowing its own boughs to be cut away. The olive tree is a symbol of the Jewish people. Lastly, he did not spare his own Son but gave him to redeem us all, disregarding the fact that we, unnaturally thankless, pay no attention, nor consider how much God's love is shown to us, but forget and neglect to follow the example of our merciful Lord in his great compassion for sinners.

Such hard and unresponsive hearts, hearts harder than flint or stone! This great lack of feeling takes us so far from God. How extraordinary it is – a thing to be marvelled at – to realize that he looks down into such utter depths of ingratitude. That is why we urge that these great kindnesses of God be recorded, so that all Christian people who come after us may bear them continuously in mind.

Responsorial. *Ps. 67: 27; 95: 1*

R: Bless the Lord in your assemblies, * bless the Lord, you of the race of Israel.

V: Sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord from all the earth.

R: Bless the Lord, you of the race of Israel.

CYCLE 2

First Reading. *Ex. 19: 1 – 19; 20: 18 – 21*

Promise of the covenant and manifestation of the Lord on Sinai.

A reading from the book of Exodus.

[Exo 19:1] On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone forth out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

[Exo 19:2] And when they set out from Reph'idim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mountain.

[Exo 19:3] And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel:

[Exo 19:4] You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

[Exo 19:5] Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine,

[Exo 19:6] and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

[Exo 19:7] So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him.

[Exo 19:8] And all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.

[Exo 19:9] And the LORD said to Moses, "Lo, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you for ever." Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

[Exo 19:10] And the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments,

[Exo 19:11] and be ready by the third day; for on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

[Exo 19:12] And you shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, 'Take heed that you do not go up into the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death;

[Exo 19:13] no hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain."

[Exo 19:14] So Moses went down from the mountain to the people, and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments.

[Exo 19:15] And he said to the people, "Be ready by the third day; do not go near a woman."

[Exo 19:16] On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

[Exo 19:17] Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

[Exo 19:18] And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.

[Exo 19:19] And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

[Exo 20:18] Now when all the people perceived the thunderings and the lightnings and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled; and they stood afar off,

[Exo 20:19] and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die."

[Exo 20:20] And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to prove you, and that the fear of him may be before your eyes, that you may not sin."

[Exo 20:21] And the people stood afar off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

Responsorial. *Ex. 19: 5, 6; 1 Pt. 2: 9*

R: If you listen to my voice and keep my covenant, you will be my property among all the nations. * You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

V: You are the elected race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the people that God has acquired.

R: You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Second Reading. *Book 4, 16, 2 – 5*

The pact of the Lord.

A reading from the treatise “Against the Heresies” of St. Irenaeus, bishop.

In Deuteronomy Moses says to the people, ‘The Lord your God made a covenant with you in Horeb, not with your fathers did the Lord make this covenant but with you’.

Why did the Lord not make the covenant with your fathers? Because ‘The law is not laid down for the just’. Your fathers lived just lives because they had the meaning of the Decalogue implanted in their hearts and minds – that is, they loved God, who made them, and they did their neighbour no injury. So they did not need to be warned by written prohibitions; for they had the righteousness of the law in their hearts.

When, however, in Egypt this righteousness and this love towards God were forgotten and became extinct, God was compelled by his deep love

towards men to reveal himself by a voice.

With power he led his people out of Egypt, so that man again might become the disciple of God and follow him. So that they might not despise their creator, he punished those who were disobedient.

He fed them with manna so that they might have spiritual food, as Moses says in Deuteronomy, 'He fed you with manna, which your fathers did not know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone; but that man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord'.

He taught them to love God, and installed in them that righteousness which is towards their neighbour. In this way they might be neither unjust nor unworthy of God. By the Decalogue he instructed men to be friends with himself and in harmony with their neighbour. Man is greatly helped by these things. God however, stands in need of nothing from man.

These blessings made man glorious, giving him what he lacked, friendship with God. They bestowed nothing on God, for God did not stand in need of man's love.

Man did not have the glory of God. The only way that man could receive this glory was by obeying God. Therefore Moses said, 'Choose life that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God and obeying his voice and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days'.

To prepare man for this life, God himself spoke the words of the Decalogue, to all men alike. And so these words remain with us too. By his coming in the flesh God did not abrogate them; he extended and augmented them. As for the precepts that enslaved, however, God imposed these on his people separately through Moses. These precepts were well devised to instruct or punish them, as Moses himself said, 'The Lord commanded me, at that same time, to teach you statutes and ordinances'.

But by the new covenant of liberty God cancelled those provisions that he had given to his people to enslave them and serve the purpose of a sign. At the same time the laws, which are natural and appropriate to free men and are applicable to all without distinction, were amplified and widened. Out of the abundance of his love, without grudging, God adopted men as his sons, and granted that they might know God as Father and love him with all their heart, and follow his Word without turning aside.

Responsorial. *Cfr. Ex. 34: 28*

R: Moses, the servant of the Lord, fasted forty days and forty nights, * in order to receive the law.

V: He remained on the mountain, before the Lord, for forty days and forty nights.

R: in order to receive the law.

Gospel. *Mt. 21: 33 – 43, 45*

He is the heir, come, let us kill him.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

[Mat 21:33] "Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country.

[Mat 21:34] When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit;

[Mat 21:35] and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

[Mat 21:36] Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them.

[Mat 21:37] Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

[Mat 21:38] But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.'

[Mat 21:39] And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

[Mat 21:40] When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

[Mat 21:41] They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

[Mat 21:42] Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:
`The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?

[Mat 21:43] Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it."

[Mat 21:45] When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them.

SATURDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading. *Dt. 32: 48 – 52; 34: 1 – 12*

The death of Moses.

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

[Deu 32:48] And the LORD said to Moses that very day,

[Deu 32:49] "Ascend this mountain of the Ab'arim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho; and view the land of Canaan, which I give to the people of Israel for a possession;

[Deu 32:50] and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died in Mount Hor and was gathered to his people;

[Deu 32:51] because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Mer'i-bath-ka'desh, in the wilderness of Zin; because you did not revere me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel.

[Deu 32:52] For you shall see the land before you; but you shall not go there, into the land which I give to the people of Israel."

[Deu 34:1] And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan,

[Deu 34:2] all Naph'tali, the land of E'phraim and Manas'seh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea,

[Deu 34:3] the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zo'ar.

[Deu 34:4] And the LORD said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there."

[Deu 34:5] So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD,

[Deu 34:6] and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-pe'or; but no man knows the place of his burial to this day.

[Deu 34:7] Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

[Deu 34:8] And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

[Deu 34:9] And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; so the people of Israel obeyed him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[Deu 34:10] And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

[Deu 34:11] none like him for all the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land,

[Deu 34:12] and for all the mighty power and all the great and terrible deeds which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.

Second Reading. Nm. 18. 22

The mystery of death.

A reading from the pastoral constitution “ Gaudium et Spes” of the Second Vatican Council on the Church in the modern world.

It is in the face of death that the riddle of a human existence grows most acute. Not only is man tormented by pain and by the advancing deterioration of his body, but even more so by a dread of perpetual extinction. He rightly follows the intuition of his heart when he abhors and repudiates the utter ruin and total disappearance of his own person. He rebels against death because he bears in himself an eternal seed that cannot be reduced to sheer matter. All the endeavours of technology, though useful in the extreme, cannot calm his anxiety; for prolongation of biological life is unable to satisfy that desire for higher life which is inescapably lodged in his breast.

Although the mystery of death utterly beggars the imagination, the Church has been taught by divine revelation and firmly teaches that man has been created by God for a blissful purpose beyond the reach of earthly misery. In addition, that bodily death from which man would have been immune had he not sinned will be vanquished, according to the Christian faith, when man who was ruined by his own doing is restored to wholeness by an almighty and merciful Saviour. For God has called man and still calls

him so that with his entire being he might be joined to Him in an endless sharing of a divine life beyond all corruption. Christ won this victory when He rose to life, for by His death He freed man from death. Hence to every thoughtful man a solidly established faith provides the answer to his anxiety about what the future holds for him. At the same time faith gives him the power to be united in Christ with his loved ones who have already been snatched away by death; faith arouses the hope that they have found true life with God.

Pressing upon the Christian to be sure, are the need and the duty to battle against evil through manifold tribulations and even to suffer death. But, linked with the paschal mystery and patterned on the dying Christ, he will hasten forward to resurrection in the strength that comes from hope.

All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery.

Such is the mystery of man, and it is a great one, as seen by believers in the light of Christian revelation. Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from His Gospel, they overwhelm us. Christ has risen, destroying death by His death; He has lavished life upon us so that, as sons in the Son, we can cry out in the Spirit; Abba, Father

Responsorial. *Ps. 26: 1; 22: 4*

R: The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom should I be afraid? *
The Lord is the defender of my life, of whom should I be terrified?

V: If I were to walk in a dark valley, I would fear no harm, because you are with me.

R: The Lord is the defender of my life, of whom should I be terrified?

CYCLE 2

First Reading. *Ex. 20: 1 – 17*

Promulgation of the Law on mount Sinai.

A reading from the book of Exodus.

[Exo 20:1] And God spoke all these words, saying,
[Exo 20:2] "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
[Exo 20:3] "You shall have no other gods before me.
[Exo 20:4] "You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;
[Exo 20:5] you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,
[Exo 20:6] but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
[Exo 20:7] "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
[Exo 20:8] "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
[Exo 20:9] Six days you shall labor, and do all your work;
[Exo 20:10] but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates;
[Exo 20:11] for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.
[Exo 20:12] "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.
[Exo 20:13] "You shall not kill.
[Exo 20:14] "You shall not commit adultery.
[Exo 20:15] "You shall not steal.
[Exo 20:16] "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
[Exo 20:17] "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Responsorial. *Ps. 18: 8, 9; Rm. 13: 8, 10*

R: The law of the Lord is perfect, it reassures the soul; the testimony of the Lord is true, it renders wise the simple; * the commands of the Lord are

limpid, they give light to the eyes.

V: He who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law; the complete fulfilment of the law is love.

R: The commands of the Lord are limpid, they give light to the eyes.

Second Reading. Cc. 6, 36; 7, 44; 8, 45; 9, 52

Let us adhere to God, the only true good.

A reading from the treatise “On the escape from the world” of St. Ambrose, bishop.

Where a man’s heart is, there will be his treasure also, for God is not wont to refuse a good gift to those who ask. So because God is good and especially good to those who serve him, we must cling to him, and be with him with all our soul and with all our heart, and with all our strength. This we must do if we are to be in his light, and see his glory, and enjoy the grace of heavenly joy. To this happiness we must lift our minds, we must be in God, and live in him and cling to him, for he is beyond all human thought and understanding and he dwells in endless peace and tranquillity. This peace passes all understanding, passes all perception.

This is the good that permeates everything. All of us live in it, depend on it. It has nothing above itself, but is divine. No one is good but God alone, because the good is divine and the divine is good. So the psalmist says, ‘When you open your hand all creatures are filled with goodness’. Through God’s goodness all the truly good things are given to us, and among them is no mixture of evil.

These are the good things that Scripture promises to the faithful in the words, ‘You shall eat the good of the land’. We are dead with Christ; in our bodies we carry the death of Christ, so that the life of Christ also may be manifested in us. We do not live any longer our own life, but the life of Christ, the life of innocence, chastity, simplicity, and of every virtue. We have risen with Christ: we must live in Christ; we must ascend in Christ, so that the serpent can no longer find our heel on earth to wound.

We must flee from here. You can flee in your mind, even though you are still held back in the body. You can be both here and you can be present with the Lord if in your soul you cling to him, if in all your thoughts you walk with him, if in faith and not in outward appearance merely you follow his ways, if you fly to him; he is our refuge and our strength. It was to God

that David said, 'In you, O Lord, do I take refuge; I have not been put to shame'.

Because God is our refuge and God is in heaven and above the heavens, we must flee from here and come to that place where there is peace and rest from our labours, where we may enjoy the great Sabbath feast, as Moses said, 'The Sabbath of the land shall provide for you'. To rest in the Lord and to gaze upon his loveliness is truly a feast and full of delight and peacefulness.

We must flee like deer running to the fountains of water. The thirst that David felt, let our soul too feel. Who is that fountain? David said, 'For with you is the fountain of life'. My soul must say to the fountain, 'When shall I come and behold your face?' For the fountain is God.

Responsorial. *Mt. 22: 37; Deut. 10: 12*

R: You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind: * this is the greatest and first commandment.

V: What does the Lord ask of you? Only this: to fear the Lord your God, to love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul:

R: this is the greatest and first commandment.

Gospel. *Lk. 15: 1 – 3, 11 – 32*

This your brother was dead and has come back to life.

A reading from the Gospel of St. Luke.

[Luke 15:1] Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him.

[Luke 15:2] And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

[Luke 15:3] So he told them this parable:

[Luke 15:11] And he said, "There was a man who had two sons;

[Luke 15:12] and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them.

[Luke 15:13] Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living.

[Luke 15:14] And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want.

[Luke 15:15] So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine.

[Luke 15:16] And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything.

[Luke 15:17] But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger!

[Luke 15:18] I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you;

[Luke 15:19] I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants."

[Luke 15:20] And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

[Luke 15:21] And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

[Luke 15:22] But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet;

[Luke 15:23] and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry;

[Luke 15:24] for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry.

[Luke 15:25] "Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.

[Luke 15:26] And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant.

[Luke 15:27] And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.'

[Luke 15:28] But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him,

[Luke 15:29] but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.

[Luke 15:30] But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!

[Luke 15:31] And he said to him, `Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

[Luke 15:32] It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."