

## WEEK 5

### SUNDAY

#### CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ap. 18: 21 – 19: 10*

*Announcement of the wedding of the Lamb.*

**A reading from the Apocalypse of St. John, apostle.**

[Rev 18:21] Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So shall Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and shall be found no more;

[Rev 18:22] and the sound of harpers and minstrels, of flute players and trumpeters, shall be heard in thee no more; and a craftsman of any craft shall be found in thee no more; and the sound of the millstone shall be heard in thee no more;

[Rev 18:23] and the light of a lamp shall shine in thee no more; and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall be heard in thee no more; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth, and all nations were deceived by thy sorcery.

[Rev 18:24] And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."

#### CHAPTE

R 19

[Rev 19:1] After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,

[Rev 19:2] for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

[Rev 19:3] Once more they cried, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

[Rev 19:4] And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"

[Rev 19:5] And from the throne came a voice crying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."

[Rev 19:6] Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

[Rev 19:7] Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

[Rev 19:8] it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure" -- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

[Rev 19:9] And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

[Rev 19:10] Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Ap. 14: 2; 19: 6, 12, 10; 19: 5*

**R:** I heard a voice that came from heaven, like the roar of loud thunder: Our God has taken possession of his kingdom. \* Now the salvation, the strength and the power of his Christ has been accomplished, alleluia.

**V:** A voice came from the throne: Praise our God, all you his servants who fear him both small and great!

**R:** Now the salvation, the strength and the power of his Christ has been accomplished, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Ps. 148, 1-2*

*The paschal alleluia.*

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

The praise of God should be the object of our meditation in this life, because in the life to come it will be forever the object of our rejoicing. No one will be fit to receive the life to come unless he has prepared himself in this life to receive it. And so in this life we do not only praise God: we make petitions to him. Our praise is expressed with joy, our petitions with sighs. For we have been promised that we shall receive what we do not yet

possess; and since he is true to his promises, we rejoice in hope; but since we have not yet received what he promised, we sigh in longing. It is good for us to persevere in longing, until the promise comes true and sighing is a thing of the past, and unalloyed rejoicing takes its place.

There are, then, two ages: the first is the present age, which consists of the temptations and tribulations of this life; the second is the future age, which consists of everlasting peace and rejoicing. So too we celebrate two seasons, one before Passover and one after. The season before Passover signifies the tribulation in which we now live; the present season after Passover signifies the happiness which will be ours hereafter. What we celebrate before Passover, we already experience; what we celebrate after Passover signifies that we do not yet possess what we celebrate. And so we keep the season before Passover in fasting and prayer; but in the present season we relax our fast and devote ourselves to praise. This is the meaning of the Alleluia that we sing.

Both of these truths are symbolized and expressed in the life of Christ our head. The Lord's passion reminds us of our state of need in this present life, in which we have to toil and suffer and finally die; the Lord's resurrection and his glorification reveal to us the life that is destined to be ours.

So now, my brothers, I urge you to praise God: this is what we all say to one another when we say Alleluia. 'Praise the Lord', you say to the one you are addressing, and he says the same to you; and by urging one another in this way, people do what they are urging the other to do. Praise God with the whole of yourselves; it is not only your tongue and your voice that should praise him, but your conscience, your life, your deeds.

We are praising God at this moment when we are gathered together in the Church; when anyone leaves to go home, in a sense he ceases to praise God. But provided he does not cease living a good life, he praises God continually. You stop praising God only when you turn aside from righteousness and all that pleases him. For if you never turn aside from a holy life, though your tongue is silent your life speaks aloud; God has ears for what your heart is saying. For just as we have ears for men's voices, God has ears for their thoughts.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Jn. 16: 20, 21*

**R:** You will be crying while the world will rejoice; \* you will be sad, but your sadness will turn to joy, alleluia.

**V:** The woman who has given birth does not remember anymore the anguish, for the joy that a man has been born.

**R:** You will be sad, but your sadness will turn to joy, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 16: 16-40*

*Difficulty of Paul at Philippi.*

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

[Acts 16:16] As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by soothsaying.

[Acts 16:17] She followed Paul and us, crying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."

[Acts 16:18] And this she did for many days. But Paul was annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

[Acts 16:19] But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the rulers;

[Acts 16:20] and when they had brought them to the magistrates they said, "These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city.

[Acts 16:21] They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

[Acts 16:22] The crowd joined in attacking them; and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods.

[Acts 16:23] And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely.

[Acts 16:24] Having received this charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

[Acts 16:25] But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,

[Acts 16:26] and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's fetters were unfastened.

[Acts 16:27] When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

[Acts 16:28] But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."

[Acts 16:29] And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,

[Acts 16:30] and brought them out and said, "Men, what must I do to be saved?"

[Acts 16:31] And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

[Acts 16:32] And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house.

[Acts 16:33] And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family.

[Acts 16:34] Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God.

[Acts 16:35] But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go."

[Acts 16:36] And the jailer reported the words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go; now therefore come out and go in peace."

[Acts 16:37] But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now cast us out secretly? No! let them come themselves and take us out."

[Acts 16:38] The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens;

[Acts 16:39] so they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city.

[Acts 16:40] So they went out of the prison, and visited Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they exhorted them and departed.

**Responsorial.** *Act. 16: 4, 5; 13: 52*

**R:** They went through the cities and transmitted to them the decisions taken by the apostles and by the elders. \* In the meantime the community became stronger in the faith and grew in number every day. Alleluia.

**V:** The disciples were full of joy and of the Holy Spirit.

**R:** In the meantime the community became stronger in the faith and grew in number every day. Alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Book 5, 9*

*Grafted in Christ, it is necessary that the Father prunes us.*

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

“If we have been grafted on to him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (Rm. 6: 5-7).

The Apostle says therefore that we are dead to sin and every one of us who have been baptised in Christ, have been baptised in his death. He writes that we have been grafted to him in his death, adding that if we have a death that is similar to his, in as much as he died to sin, we have to also await a resurrection that is similar to his. But so that this can come about, he shows up to what point our old man has to be crucified with Christ. For old man we have to understand our previous life passed in sin, to which we put an end to and which in some way we destroy when we welcome the faith in the cross of Christ, through which the body of sin is destroyed, in a way that our members that served sin, do not serve it anymore, but serve God.

But taking up again the discourse, we see what it means to be grafted to Christ with a death that is similar to his. The Apostle presents the death of Christ to which he wants to graft us like the plantation of a tree, so that taking vigour from its roots, our roots also can produce branches of justice and fruits of life.

If you want to know which is the plant in the Scriptures to which we have to be grafted and of what nature is the tree, listen to what is written of Wisdom: “ It is the tree of life for the one who hopes in it, and he who embraces it is blessed” (Pr. 3: 18). “Christ, therefore, who is the power of

God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1: 24), is the tree of life on to which we have to be grafted; and his death, through a new and lovable gift of God, becomes the tree of life for us. Rightly however the Apostle, knowing that here we are not dealing with the common death but of the death to sin, does, not say: grafted on to his death, but in a likeness of his death. Christ in fact has died for sin once and for all, he who absolutely “did not commit sin, and on whose mouth no deceit was found” (1 Pt. 2: 22).

This cannot be found in such an absolute way in any other man. No one is pure of sin, not even a one-day-old baby (cfr. Ps. 13: 3).

Therefore it is certain that we can die the death that Jesus died because of sin, which in truth he had not committed, because we cannot ignore sin in an absolute way. We can above all have a similarity, in as much as we abstain from sin imitating Jesus and following his footsteps.

This is the possibility given to human nature of having a similarity with his death, because imitating him it does not sin. And observe how it was necessary to choose the image of the plantation. Every plant in fact, after the death of winter, awaits the resurrection of spring. If therefore we are united to the death of Christ in the winter of this world and of the present life, also in the future spring we will be found fruitful in the justice that comes from the root of Christ. And if we are grafted on to him, it is necessary that the Father the farmer prunes us, like branches of the true vine, so that we may bear fruit more abundantly.

**Responsorial.** *Col. 3: 3; Rm. 6: 11*

**R:** You are dead and your life is already hidden with Christ in God! \* When Christ your life will be manifested, then you also will be manifested with him in glory, alleluia.

**V:** You also consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive for God, in Christ Jesus, alleluia.

**R:** When Christ your life will be manifested, then you also will be manifested with him in glory, alleluia.

YEAR A

**Gospel.** *Jn. 14: 1-12*

*I am the way, the truth and the life.*

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

[John 14:1] "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me.

[John 14:2] In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

[John 14:3] And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

[John 14:4] And you know the way where I am going."

[John 14:5] Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?"

[John 14:6] Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.

[John 14:7] If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him."

[John 14:8] Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied."

[John 14:9] Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

[John 14:10] Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

[John 14:11] Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.

[John 14:12] "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father.

**Third Reading. C. 12, 52-55**

*The place is near the Father, the way is Christ.*

**A reading from the book "The good of death" of St. Ambrose, bishop.**

Let us go without fear to Jesus, our Redeemer, let us go with a brave heart towards the throng of saints, towards the gathering of the just. Yes, we will go from our fathers, we will go from the masters of our faith; and even



if our works are defective, the faith will help us, the promise will be fulfilled. The Lord will be the light of everyone; and that true light that illuminates every man, will shine over all. We will go there where the Lord Jesus has prepared the mansions for his servants, so that where he is we also may be. Thus in fact was how he wanted it. Listen to what he says with regard to this: "In my Father's house there are many places". And what is his will? "I will return and I will take you with me, so that you also may be where I am" (Jn. 14: 2,3). But you may object that he was speaking only to his disciples, that only to them he was promising many places. Then was it only for eleven disciples that he was preparing them? And how would that affirmation of his that people from every part would come to sit at the table in the kingdom of God, have been realised? Can we doubt that the divine will would be fulfilled, if for Christ to want is to do? Finally, he has indicated the way and the place saying: "And of the place where I go, you know the way" (Jn.14: 4). The place is with the Father, the way is Christ, as he himself says: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father if not through me" (Jn. 14: 6).

Let us enter into this way, let us guard the truth, let us follow the life. He is the way that leads, truth that comforts, life that gives himself. So that then we could know his true will, at the end of the discourse he adds: "Father, I want that also those whom you gave me be with me where I am, so that they can contemplate my glory" (Jn. 17: 24). Father: this repetition of the name is a confirmation, like "Abraham, Abraham!" (Gen. 22: 1). And in another passage we read: "I, I cancel your misdeeds" (Is. 43: 25). It is beautiful that what he has promised before, here he asks for. This of first promising and then asking, and not vice versa, is a promising as the arbitrator of the gift, who knows his own power: he asks the Father as an interpreter of his goodness. First he has promised, so that you may know his power; then he asked, in order to make you understand the goodness. He did not first ask and then promise, so that you would believe that he promised in as much as he had fulfilled, but rather that he would have given all that he had promised. Nor believing superfluous the fact that he had asked, since it demonstrates to you his communion with the will of the Father, which is a proof of unity, not an increase of power.

We follow you, Lord Jesus; but you call us so that we can truly follow you, because without you no one can ascend. You in fact are the way, the

truth, the life, you the possibility, the faithfulness, the prize. As a way you welcome your own, as truth you confirm them, as life, you vivify them.

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 6: 44; 14: 6*

**R:** Jesus said to his disciples: \* No one can come to me, unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me, alleluia.

**V:** I am the way, the truth and the life.

**R:** No one can come to me, unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me, alleluia.

YEAR B

**Gospel.** *Jn. 15: 1-8*

*He who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit.*

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

[John 15:1] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

[John 15:2] Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

[John 15:3] You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you.

[John 15:4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

[John 15:5] I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

[John 15:6] If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned.

[John 15:7] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

[John 15:8] By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.

**Third Reading.** *Book 10, 2*

*I am the vine, you the branches.*

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

The Lord speaks of himself as the vine, wanting to show the necessity for us to be rooted in his love, and the advantage that is gained by our being united to him. Those who are united to him, and who are in a certain way incorporated and grafted to him, he compares to branches. These are made participants of his same nature, through the communication of the Holy Spirit. In fact the Holy Spirit of Christ unites us to him.

We have drawn near to Christ in faith through a good deliberation of the will, but we participate of his nature through having obtained from him the dignity of adoption. In fact, according to St. Paul, “He who unites himself to the Lord forms only one spirit with him” (1 Cor. 6: 17).

We are built on Christ, our support and foundation, and we are called living and spiritual stones for a holy priesthood and for the temple of God in the Spirit. We cannot be built if Christ does not construct our foundation. The same thing is expressed with the analogy of the vine.

He says that he himself is the vine and almost the mother and the wet-nurse of the branches that sprout from it. In fact we have been regenerated by him and in him in the Spirit to bear fruit of life, but of a new life that consists essentially in the active love towards him. Those of before were rotten fruits of a decadent life.

We are then conserved in the being, inserted in some way in him, if we follow tenaciously the holy commandments that were given to us, if we take all care to conserve the grade of nobility that we have obtained, and if we do not permit the Holy Spirit who lives in us, that Spirit which reveals to us the sense of the divine inhabitation, to be saddened.

The way with which we are in Christ and he in us, is explained to us by St. John: “We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit” (1 Jn. 4: 13).

As the roots communicate to the branches the qualities and the condition of its nature, so also the Only-begotten Word of God confers to men, and above all to those who are united to him through faith, his Spirit, he concedes to them every kind of holiness, he confers the affinity and the relationship with his nature and that of the Father, he feeds the love and procures the science of every virtue and goodness.

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 15: 4, 16*

**R:** Remain in me and I in you. \* I have constituted you so that you may go out and bear fruit and that your fruit may remain, alleluia.

**V:** As the branch cannot give fruit by itself if it does not remain in the vine, so also you if you do not remain in me.

**R:** I have constituted you so that you may go out and bear fruit and that your fruit may remain, alleluia.

YEAR C

**Gospel.** *Jn. 13:31-33, 34-35*

*I give you a new commandment: that you love one another.*

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

[John 13:31] When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified;

[John 13:32] if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.

[John 13:33] Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.'

[John 13:34] A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

[John 13:35] By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

**Third Reading.** *Tratt. 65, 1-3*

*The new commandment.*

**A reading from the "Treatise on John" of St. Augustine, bishop**

The Lord Jesus declares that He is giving His disciples a new commandment, that they should love one another. "A new commandment,"

He says, "I give unto you, that you love one another."

But was not this already commanded in the ancient law of God, where it is written, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself"? Why, then, is it called a new one by the Lord, when it is proved to be so old? Is it on this account a new commandment, because He has divested us of the old, and clothed us with the new man? For it is not indeed every kind of love that renews him that listens to it, or rather yields it obedience, but that love regarding which the Lord, in order to distinguish it from all carnal affection, added, "as I have loved you."

This is the love that renews us, making us new men, heirs of the New Testament, singers of the new song. It was this love, beloved brethren, that renewed also those of olden time, who were then the righteous, the patriarchs and prophets, as it did afterwards the blessed apostles: it is it, too, that is now renewing the nations, and from among the universal race of man, which overspreads the whole world, is making and gathering together a new people, the body of the newly-married spouse of the only-begotten Son of God, of whom it is said in the Song of Songs, "Who is she that ascends, made white?" Made white indeed, because renewed; and how, but by the new commandment?

Because of this, the members thereof have a mutual interest in one another; and if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; and one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it. For this they hear and observe, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another:" not as those love one another who are corrupters, nor as men love one another in a human way; but they love one another as those who are God's, and all of them sons of the Highest, and brethren, therefore, of His only Son, with that mutual love wherewith He loved them, when about to lead them on to the goal where all sufficiency should be theirs, and where their every desire should be satisfied with good things. For then there will be nothing wanting they can desire, when God will be all in all.

And this love is bestowed on us by Him who said, "As I have loved you, you also love one another." For this very end, therefore, did He love us, that we also should love one another; bestowing this on us by His own love to us, that we should be bound to one another in mutual love, and, united together as members by so pleasant a bond, should be the body of so mighty a Head.

**Responsorial.** *cfr. 1 JN. 4: 21; Mt. 22: 40*

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

**V:** From these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.

**R:** He who loves God, must love also his brother, alleluia.

Or

**Third Reading.** *Book 9*

*The way of loving.*

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

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another” (Jn. 13: 34). But how can he speak of a new commandment, someone will say, if already through Moses he had ordered our ancestors: “You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind (Deut. 6: 5) and your neighbour as yourself” (Lev. 19: 18; cfr. Mk. 12: 30-31)? Behold, after having put the love towards God in the first place, he added the reciprocal love towards one another, uniting together the first and the second, as if to say that there is not a true love of God, if this is not followed by the love that must be shown to the neighbour. All of us in fact are brothers. For this John who knew this well and thus taught to the others, says with great wisdom: “He who loves God, loves also his brother” (1Jn. 4: 21).

Why therefore does Christ call this commandment, which was already established in the old law, new? But consider with what security he uses it and see what he adds on to it. He does not content himself by saying: “I give you a new commandment: that you love one another” (Jn. 13: 34); but in order to show the newness of the discourse, that is that his love has something that is greater and more excellent than that required for the neighbour by the Old Testament, he adds immediately: “as I have loved you, so also you must love one another”.

We must scrutinize the sense of these words and ask ourselves in what way Christ has loved us. Only then will we be able to easily evaluate what is new and different in the commandment that is given to us now. Jesus therefore, “though being of divine nature, did not consider his equality with God a treasure to be guarded jealously; but he undressed himself, assuming

the condition of a servant and becoming similar to men; he appeared in human form, he humiliated himself making himself obedient unto death and to death on a cross” (Phil. 2: 6-8). In brief, “from rich that he was he became poor” as the apostle Paul attests again (2 Cor. 8: 9).

Do you recognize the newness of his love towards you? The law commanded to love the brother as himself. But our Lord Jesus Christ has loved us more than he loved himself.

If he had not loved us in this way, he would not have descended from the nature of God and from his equality with the Father down to our misery, he would not have borne such a cruel death for us, the slaps of the Jews, the derision and the insults; in one word, all that he had suffered and that are too many to enumerate. If he had not loved us more than himself, he would not have wanted even to become poor, from rich that he was. Unheard of, therefore, and new is the measure of this love!

Consequently, he commanded that we also should dispose ourselves to not prefer anything to the love of the brothers; neither glory, nor riches, and not to hesitate, whenever it was necessary, to go even to death, in order to save the neighbour. This the blessed disciples of our Saviour and those who followed their footprints also did, placing the salvation of the others before their own life; they did not avoid any effort and they did not refuse to suffer the gravest evils in order to save the souls that were being lost.

For which Paul said: “Every day I face death” (1 Cor. 15: 31). And again: “ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?” (2 Cor. 11: 29).

The Saviour has commanded us to cultivate this new love, superior to that according to the law, like the root of the most perfect piety towards God, since he knew that we could not be pleasing to God and attain the sublime and perfect goods, if not by following the beauty of that love that he himself has diffused in our hearts.

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 13: 34, 15, 35*

**R:** I give you a new commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. \* I have given you in fact an example, so that you should do as I have done for you, alleluia.

**V:** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

**R:** I have given you in fact an example, so that you should do as I have done for you, alleluia.



# MONDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ap. 19: 11-21*

*The victory of the Word of God.*

**A reading from the Apocalypse of St. John, apostle.**

[Rev 19:11] Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

[Rev 19:12] His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself.

[Rev 19:13] He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

[Rev 19:14] And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses.

[Rev 19:15] From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

[Rev 19:16] On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords.

[Rev 19:17] Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly in midheaven, "Come, gather for the great supper of God,

[Rev 19:18] to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."

[Rev 19:19] And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army.

[Rev 19:20] And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur.

[Rev 19:21] And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged

with their flesh.

**Responsorial.** *Ap. 19: 13, 15, 16*

**R:** He is clothed in a cloak dipped in blood and his name is Word of God. \*  
He will tread the winepress of the fury of the Almighty God, alleluia.

**V:** On his Cloak and on his thigh it is written: King of kings and Lord of lords.

**R:** He will tread the winepress of the fury of the Almighty God, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 20, 54-55*

*All of us have received from the fullness of the Word.*

**A reading from the “Commentary on psalm 118” of St. Ambrose, bishop.**

“Lord, do you see that I love your precepts, according to your grace give me life” (Ps. 118: 159). Turning to God the psalmist asks him to set his glance on his sentiment that is full of love.

No one asks to be looked at if not him who thinks that he can be pleasing.

He well says: “See”, and he says it according to the law, which commanded that everyone three times a year presented himself in front of the Lord. The saint every day offers himself, every day he presents himself in front of him, and not empty handed. He who has received from his fullness cannot be empty.

David was not empty when he said: “Our mouths are full of your joy” (PS. 125: 2 vulg.), because the joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And as all of us have received from the fullness of the Word, according to the words of John, so also the Holy Spirit of his fullness has filled the world. Zechariah was not empty, when full of the Holy Spirit he prophesied the coming of the Lord Jesus. Paul who evangelised always “in abundance” was not empty; and he was “overflowing” receiving from the Ephesians the good perfume of sweetness, the host pleasing to God (cfr. Ep. 5: 2). The Corinthians, in whom the grace of God abounded, were not empty according to the testimony of the same Apostle (cfr. 1 Cor. 1: 4-7).

Therefore David offered himself every day to God and not empty handed, if it could be said: “Breathlessly I open my mouth” (PS. 118: 131).

For this I said: “See that I love your precepts” (118: 159).

Listen to the way in which you too must offer yourself to Christ. Not with material, visible gifts, but with your inner self and in secret, so that “your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you” (Mt. 6: 4) and reward the sincere affection.

“I love”, says the psalm, “your precepts”. He does not say I have observed them, and neither I have kept them, since the imprudent have not kept the precepts of the Lord. He however who has become perfect in the mind and possesses the perfect wisdom, loves; which is more than having kept it; because to keep is a sign of necessity and more or less of fear; to love instead is the sign of charity. He who evangelises keeps and, doing it voluntarily, he receives the reward. What greater reward will be given to him who loves! We can also not love that which we want; we cannot not want that which we love.

But as great as the reward of perfect love can be, he who loves asks the help of the divine mercy, in order to be vivified by the Lord. It is not therefore a presumptuous collector of the due tax, but a modest imploring of the divine mercy.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 1: 30-31; Tt. 2: 14*

**R:** It is through the work of God that Jesus has become for us wisdom, justice, sanctification and redemption \* therefore as it is written: let him who boasts boast in the Lord, alleluia.

**V:** He has given himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity.

**R:** Therefore as it is written: let him who boasts boast in the Lord, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 17: 1-18*

*Paul reaches Athens.*

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

[Acts 17:1] Now when they had passed through Amphip'olis and Apollo'nia, they came to Thessaloni'ca, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

[Acts 17:2] And Paul went in, as was his custom, and for three weeks he argued with them from the scriptures,

[Acts 17:3] explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."

[Acts 17:4] And some of them were persuaded, and joined Paul and Silas; as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.

[Acts 17:5] But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked fellows of the rabble, they gathered a crowd, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the people.

[Acts 17:6] And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brethren before the city authorities, crying, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,

[Acts 17:7] and Jason has received them; and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus."

[Acts 17:8] And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard this.

[Acts 17:9] And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

[Acts 17:10] The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Beroe'a; and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.

[Acts 17:11] Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessaloni'ca, for they received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

[Acts 17:12] Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.

[Acts 17:13] But when the Jews of Thessaloni'ca learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Beroe'a also, they came there too, stirring up and inciting the crowds.

[Acts 17:14] Then the brethren immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there.

[Acts 17:15] Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as

possible, they departed.

[Acts 17:16] Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.

[Acts 17:17] So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market place every day with those who chanced to be there.

[Acts 17:18] Some also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers met him. And some said, "What would this babbler say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities" -- because he preached Jesus and the resurrection.

**Responsorial.** *Act. 9: 15-16*

**R:** He is for me an elected instrument \* to bring my name before the nations, before kings and before the children of Israel. Alleluia.

**V:** And I will show him how much he will have to suffer for my name.

**R:** To bring my name before the nations, before kings and before the children of Israel. Alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 42*

*First-born among many brothers.*

**A reading from the “Discourses” of the blessed Isaac of Stella, abbot.**

The head and the body of one man are one man; so too the Son of the Virgin and his chosen members are one man and one Son of man. Scripture says: ‘Christ is whole and entire, head and body’. For all the members together are one body, which with its head is one Son of man, who with the Son of God is one Son of God, who himself with God is one God.

Therefore the whole body with its head is the Son of man and the Son of God and God. This is the meaning of the words: ‘Father, I desire that, as you and I are one, they also may be one with us’.

So according to this famous passage of scripture there is no body without the head, and no head without the body; nor without God is there any head or body to make the whole Christ.

Everything then that is with God makes one God. The Son of God is with God by nature, the Son of man is with him by person, and Christ’s body is with Christ by the sacrament.

Consequently the faithful and spiritual members of Christ can truly say that they are what he is, even the Son of God, even God. But he is so by nature, they by sharing; he of his fullness, they by participation. In short, what the Son of God is by birth, his members are by adoption, according to the words of scripture: 'You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, enabling us to cry, "Abba! Father!"'

By virtue of the Spirit he gave them power to become sons of God, so that they are chosen to be brought by the one who is the first born among many brethren to say: 'Our Father, who art in heaven'. And in another place he says: 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father'.

The Son of man, our head, was born from the Virgin's womb by the Spirit; and by the same Spirit we are born again from the baptismal font as sons of God, as his body. He was born without any sin; we are reborn for the remission of all our sins.

He bore on the cross in his human body all the sins of the whole body; and by the grace of rebirth he has granted to his spiritual body that it shall be charged with no sin. For scripture says: 'Blessed is the man whom the Lord has not charged with his sin'. That blessed man is clearly Christ; insofar as God is his head. Christ forgives sins; insofar as the head of the body is one man, there is no sin to forgive; but insofar as the body of the head is many men, there is sin, but it is not charged.

He is righteous in himself, and makes himself righteous. He is the one Saviour, the one saved. In his body he bore on the wood of the cross what he took away from his body by the water of baptism. He is the Lamb of God, who saves us by the wood of the cross and water, who takes away the sins of the world which he bore, who is priest and sacrifice and God, who offered himself to himself, and so through himself reconciled himself to himself, as well as to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

**Responsorial.** *Rom. 12: 5; Col. 2: 9-10; 1: 18*

**R:** All of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other. \* In him lives the fullness of divinity, and in him you find your own fulfilment, alleluia.

**V:** He is the source of the body's life, the first to return from the dead, to be in all things alone supreme.

**R:** In him lives the fullness of divinity, and in him you find your own fulfilment, alleluia.

**Gospel. Jn. 14: 21- 26**

*The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name will teach you everything.*

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

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

[John 14:22] Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?"

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

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

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

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

# TUESDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ap. 20: 1-15*

*The final battle of the dragon.*

**A reading from the Apocalypse of St. John, apostle.**

[Rev 20:1] Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain.

[Rev 20:2] And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,

[Rev 20:3] and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while.

[Rev 20:4] Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom judgment was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

[Rev 20:5] The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

[Rev 20:6] Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years.

[Rev 20:7] And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison

[Rev 20:8] and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.

[Rev 20:9] And they marched up over the broad earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city; but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

[Rev 20:10] and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.



[Rev 20:11] Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

[Rev 20:12] And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done.

[Rev 20:13] And the sea gave up the dead in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all were judged by what they had done.

[Rev 20:14] Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire;

[Rev 20:15] and if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

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

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

**V:** The death and Hades gave up their dead, and then the death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire:

**R:** the last enemy to be destroyed will be the death, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Nm. 5-6*

*The Christians in the world.*

**A reading from the “Letter to Diognetus”.**

The difference between Christians and the rest of mankind is not a matter of nationality, or language, or customs. Christians do not live apart in separate cities of their own, speak any dialect, nor practise any eccentric way of life. The doctrine they profess is not the invention of busy human minds and brains, nor are they, like some, adherents of this or that school of human thought.

They pass their lives in whatever township – Greek or foreign – each man’s lot has determined; and conform to ordinary local usage in their clothing, diet, and other habits. Nevertheless, the organization of their community does exhibit some features that are remarkable, and even surprising. For instance, though they are residents at home in their own countries, their behaviour there is more like that of transients; they take

their full part as citizens, but they also submit to anything and everything as if they were aliens. For them, any foreign country is a motherland, and any motherland is a foreign country. Like other men, they marry and beget children, though they do not expose their infants. Any Christian is free to share his neighbour's table, but never his marriage-bed.

Though destiny has placed them here in the flesh, they do not live after the flesh; their days are passed on the earth, but their citizenship is above in the heavens. They obey the prescribed laws, but in their own private lives they transcend the laws. They show love to all men – and all men persecute them. They are misunderstood and condemned; yet by suffering death they are quickened into life. They are poor, yet making many rich; lacking all things, yet having all things in abundance. They are dishonoured, yet made glorious in their very dishonour; slandered, yet vindicated. They repay calumny with blessings, and abuse with courtesy. For the good they do, they suffer stripes as evildoers; and under the strokes they rejoice like men given new life. Jews assail them as heretics, and Greeks harass them with persecution; and yet of all their ill wishers there is not one who can produce good grounds for his hostility.

To put it briefly, the relation of Christians to the world is that of a soul to the body. As the soul is diffused through every part of the body, so are Christians through all the cities of the world. The soul, too, inhabits the body, while at the same time forming no part of it; and Christians inhabit the world, but they are not part of the world. The soul, invisible herself, is immured within a visible body; so Christians can be recognised in the world, but their Christianity itself remains hidden from the eye. The flesh hates the soul, and wars against her without any provocation, because she is an obstacle to its own self-indulgence; and the world similarly hates the Christians without provocation, because they are opposed to its pleasures.

All the same, the soul loves the flesh and all its members, despite their hatred for her; and Christians, too, love those who hate them. The soul, shut up inside the body, nevertheless holds the body together; and though they are confined within the world as in a dungeon, it is Christians who hold the world together. The soul, which is immortal, must dwell in a mortal tabernacle; the Christians, as they sojourn for a while in the midst of corruptibility here, look for incorruptibility in the heavens. Finally, just as to be stinted of food and drink makes for the soul's improvement, so when Christians are every day subjected to ill treatment, they increase the more in

numbers. Such is the high post of duty in which God has placed them, and it is their moral duty not to shrink from it.

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 8: 11; Sir. 24: 25*

**R:** I am the light of the world. \* He who follows me can never walk in darkness; he will possess the light that is life, alleluia.

**V:** In me is all grace of way and of truth, in me all hope of life and of strength.

**R:** He who follows me can never walk in darkness; he will possess the light that is life, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 17: 19-34*

*Discourse of Paul in the Areopagus.*

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

[Acts 17:19] And they took hold of him and brought him to the Areop'agus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you present?"

[Acts 17:20] For you bring some strange things to our ears; we wish to know therefore what these things mean."

[Acts 17:21] Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

[Acts 17:22] So Paul, standing in the middle of the Are-op'agus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.

[Acts 17:23] For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

[Acts 17:24] The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man,

[Acts 17:25] nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything.

[Acts 17:26] And he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of

their habitation,

[Acts 17:27] that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us,

[Acts 17:28] for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.'

[Acts 17:29] Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man.

[Acts 17:30] The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent,

[Acts 17:31] because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead."

[Acts 17:32] Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, "We will hear you again about this."

[Acts 17:33] So Paul went out from among them.

[Acts 17:34] But some men joined him and believed, among them Dionys'ius the Are-op'agite and a woman named Dam'aris and others with them.

**Responsorial.** *Act. 10: 40, 42; 17: 28*

**R:** God has resurrected Jesus of Nazareth on the third day \* and he has ordered us to proclaim that he has been constituted the judge of the living and the dead by God. Alleluia.

**V:** In him in fact we live, we move and we exist.

**R:** And he has ordered us to proclaim that God has constituted him the judge of the living and the dead. Alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Book 3*

*Christ is at the same time priest and altar, victim and the one who offers, end and object of his offering.*

**A reading from the treatise "The life of Christ" of Nicholas Cabasilas.**

The illumination of baptism is infused immediately into the souls purified by this sacrament; however it is not perceived by all then, but only after a certain time and by virtuous persons, who through a difficult ascent

and in the love for Christ have by this time purified the eye of the soul. Owing to this anointing we become the house of prayer, and we can call ourselves like this because an ointment has been effused in us: the Advocate whom we have with God the Father; and for this, he who has effused himself and has become chrism, has effused himself up to our soul.

The altars therefore signify the hand of the Saviour: thus from the sacred table, almost from his most holy hand, we take the bread, the Body of Christ, and we drink His blood, like those who the Lord admitted first to that meal, drinking himself openly to their health that tremendous chalice.

He himself in fact is priest and altar, host and the one who offers, the end of his offering and that which it constitutes. He has made the reality pass into the mysteries, attributing this to the chalice of blessing, that to the anointing. And in reality, the Saviour is the altar of the sacrifice, being the Anointed. In origin the altar was instituted so that on it could be done the anointing, and to be priest meant to do this. But the Saviour is also sacrifice because of the cross and death, in as much as he died for God, for the glory of the Father; therefore every time that we eat of this bread, he says, we announce his death and his immolation.

Moreover the Lord, because of the Holy Spirit, is ointment and anointing. For this he was able to fulfil the most holy actions and to sanctify; but he could not be sanctified and in any way suffer. To sanctify was characteristic of the altar, of the one who sacrifices and of the one who offers, not of those who are offered and sacrificed. In fact: "He is the altar – he says – that makes the offering sacred" (Mt. 23: 19). But the Lord is bread because of his flesh, sanctified by the anointing and deified through the wounds received. He says in fact: "The bread that I will give is my flesh (that I will sacrifice) for the life of the world" (Jn. 6: 51). As bread he is offered, like ointment he offers, be it deifying his own flesh, be it rendering us consorts of his anointing.

Jacob, prefiguring all this, after having anointed with oil a stone, dedicated it to the Lord, offering it to him in the anointing: in the same way the flesh of the Saviour is indicated, the supreme corner stone and the true Israel, the mind that alone knows the Father and who has effused the anointing of the divinity; and we were prefigured, the children of Abraham by him raised from the stones, and made participants of the anointing. Actually the Holy Spirit, effused on them who had received the anointing, is he himself, without speaking of the other gifts that he confers on us, the

Spirit of adoption as sons. He “gives witness to our spirit that we are children of God, (Rm. 8: 16) crying out in our hearts: Abba, Father!” (Gal. 4: 6).

For this the most holy ointment serves for those who want to live in Christ.

**Responsorial.** *Heb. 6: 20; Ep. 5: 2*

**R:** Jesus has entered for us like a precursor, Lamb without stain, \* having become high Priest for ever like Melchizedek of old, alleluia.

**V:** Christ has loved us and has given himself for us, offering himself to God in a sweet smelling sacrifice,

**R:** having become high Priest forever like Melchizedek of old, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 14: 27-31*

*My peace I give you.*

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

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

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

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

[John 14:30] I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me;

[John 14:31] but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go hence.

# WEDNESDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ap. 21: 1-8*

*The New Jerusalem.*

**A reading from the Apocalypse of St. John, apostle.**

[Rev 21:1] Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

[Rev 21:2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;

[Rev 21:3] and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them;

[Rev 21:4] he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

[Rev 21:5] And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true."

[Rev 21:6] And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the fountain of the water of life without payment.

[Rev 21:7] He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son.

[Rev 21:8] But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death."

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Ap. 21: 3, 4*

**R:** Behold the dwelling of God with men. He will live in their midst. \* God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, alleluia.

**V:** Death will be no more, mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the things of before are passed away.

**R:** God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *On the resurrection of Christ 1*

*First-born of a new creation.*

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

The kingdom of life has come and the empire of death has been destroyed. A new form of birth has arrived and with it another life, another way of living, a change has come over our nature. What manner of birth is this? It is not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.

How can this be? Listen and I shall explain it briefly. This child is conceived by faith and comes to light through the rebirth of baptism. The Church nurses her and suckles her with doctrines and precepts to live by; her food is the bread of heaven. Heavenly citizenship is the perfection she grows to, her marriage is her familiarity with wisdom, her children are hope, her home the kingdom, her inheritance and wealth are the delights of paradise, and her end is not death but that blessed and eternal life prepared for those who are worthy.

This is the day the Lord has made – a day far other than those made at the creation of the world which are measured by the passage of time. This day is the beginning of another creation, for on this day God made a new heaven and a new earth as the prophet says. What heaven? The firmament of the faith we have in Christ. What earth? The good heart that is like the earth, which drinks the rain that descends on it and brings forth varied fruit.

In this creation the sun is a pure life; the stars are virtues: the air is candid behaviour; the sea is the depth and the riches of wisdom and knowledge. Grass and seeds are the divine teaching and sound doctrine that are picked and eaten by the people of the pasture, that is by God’s flock. The trees bearing fruit are the observance of the commandments.

On this day the true man is created according to the image and likeness of God. This surely is the world that begins with the words, ‘This is the day the Lord has made’. This is surely a day unlike any other day, as the prophet says, and a night unlike any other night.

But we have not yet explained the most astonishing fact of all in this grace: it destroys the sorrows of death and brings forth the first-born of the dead.



‘I ascend’, he says, ‘to my Father and to your Father, my God and your God’. O wonderful and excellent news! Though he is the Only begotten and became like us for our sake in order to make us his brothers, he now takes back his manhood to his true Father in order to take back with him all his kin.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 15: 21-22; 2 Pt. 3: 13*

**R:** Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. \* Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ, alleluia.

**V:** What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and the new earth.

**R:** Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 18: 1-28*

*Foundation of the Church of Corinth.*

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

[Acts 18:1] After this he left Athens and went to Corinth.

[Acts 18:2] And he found a Jew named Aq'uila, a native of Pontus, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them;

[Acts 18:3] and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them, and they worked, for by trade they were tentmakers.

[Acts 18:4] And he argued in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

[Acts 18:5] When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedo'nia, Paul was occupied with preaching, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

[Acts 18:6] And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

[Acts 18:7] And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue.

[Acts 18:8] Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.

[Acts 18:9] And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent;

[Acts 18:10] for I am with you, and no man shall attack you to harm you; for I have many people in this city."

[Acts 18:11] And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

[Acts 18:12] But when Gallio was proconsul of Acha'ia, the Jews made a united attack upon Paul and brought him before the tribunal,

[Acts 18:13] saying, "This man is persuading men to worship God contrary to the law."

[Acts 18:14] But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, I should have reason to bear with you, O Jews;

[Acts 18:15] but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I refuse to be a judge of these things."

[Acts 18:16] And he drove them from the tribunal.

[Acts 18:17] And they all seized Sos'thenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to this.

[Acts 18:18] After this Paul stayed many days longer, and then took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aq'uila. At Cen'chre-ae he cut his hair, for he had a vow.

[Acts 18:19] And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there; but he himself went into the synagogue and argued with the Jews.

[Acts 18:20] When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined;

[Acts 18:21] but on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus.

[Acts 18:22] When he had landed at Caesare'a, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.

[Acts 18:23] After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phryg'ia, strengthening all the disciples.

[Acts 18:24] Now a Jew named Apol'los, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures.

[Acts 18:25] He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

[Acts 18:26] He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aq'uila heard him, they took him and expounded to him the way of God more accurately.

[Acts 18:27] And when he wished to cross to Acha'ia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed,

[Acts 18:28] for he powerfully confuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

**Responsorial.** *Act. 18: 9- 10; Ex. 4: 12*

**R:** One night in a vision the Lord said to Paul. Do not be afraid. \* Continue to speak and do not keep silent, because I am with you. Alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** I will be in your mouth and I will teach you what you have to say.

**R:** Continue to speak and do not keep silent, because I am with you. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Book 4*

*If we live in Christ what else can we desire?*

**A reading from the treatise “The life in Christ” of Nicholas Cabasilas.**

After the sacred anointing, we pass to the holy table which is the end and the goal of the life with which we are dealing, reaching which nothing more will be lacking to our searched for and desired happiness. In that life, in fact, death and burial will not be found anymore, and not even a better common life, but He who is resurrected. There we will not only receive the gifts of the Spirit according to our capacity, but the donor himself, the same temple, where all the world of graces is found. He is present, certainly, in every mystery and in him, so to say, we are anointed and washed; or better, he himself is our anointing and our bath, and together our food.

Above all he is present in those who are baptised, and on them he confers his gifts; certainly not in the same way in everyone, but washing he takes away the mud of vices and imprints in them his image; anointing them

he renders them active and courageous in the works of the Spirit, of which he himself assuming human flesh has made a treasure.

But after he has led the initiated to the table, that is to nourish him of the gift of his body, he changes him totally, transforming him in himself. Therefore this is the greatest of all sacraments, because it is not possible to go beyond this, nor can he give more.

The baptised shows us therefore that which he owes to the sacrament of baptism. This is not however the perfection. As yet he does not have the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are conferred with the sacred chrism.

On those whom Philip had baptised the Holy Spirit had not yet descended with this benefit. The hands of Peter and John were necessary. "It had not yet descended in fact, he says, on any of them, but they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they imposed their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit" (Act. 8: 16-17).

To some of them who were full of the Spirit, who prophesied, who spoke in different languages and were seen to have other charisms, were however lacking a lot in order to be men of God and spiritual, because they were afflicted by envy, ambition, rivalry, and by other vices of this kind. Of this Paul rebukes them: "You are still carnal, and you behave in a completely human manner" (1 Cor. 3: 2); yet they were spiritual with regard to a certain sector of grace, but this was not enough to eradicate from the soul all wickedness. In the Eucharist this cannot happen. Those in whom the bread of life has accomplished such works through which death is avoided, if participating at the table are not held responsible for any fault, nor have fallen later on, cannot be accused by anyone like this. Certainly this mystery cannot operate completely: it cannot, I say, free the initiated from any imperfection.

Why? Because the mystery operates like this when they who dispose themselves do not lack any possible condition. The promise of the table has made us dwell in Christ and Christ in us. He says in fact: "He will live in me and I in him" (Jn. 6: 56). If Christ dwells in us, what else could we search for? If we dwell in Christ, what else could we desire? He dwells in us and is at the same time our habitation. O we who are blessed because of such a habitation and doubly blessed, because we have become inhabitants of such a house. In fact the souls and the body and all the faculties immediately spiritualise themselves, because the soul unites itself intimately to the soul of Christ, the body to his body and our blood to his.

What is derived from this? That which is superior prevails over all that is lower and the divine surpasses the human, because, as Paul has written of the resurrection: “ That which is mortal is absorbed by the life” (2 Cor. 4: 4).

As to the rest: “It is not I who live anymore, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2: 20).

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 15: 5; Gal. 2:20*

**R:** Jesus said to his disciples: He who remains in me and I in him, bears much fruit. \* Without me you cannot do anything, alleluia.

**V:** It is not I who live anymore, but Christ lives in me.

**R:** Without me you cannot do anything, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 15: 1-8*

*He who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit.*

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

[John 15:1] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

[John 15:2] Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

[John 15:3] You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you.

[John 15:4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

[John 15:5] I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

[John 15:6] If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned.

[John 15:7] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

[John 15:8] By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.



# THURSDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ap. 21: 9-27*

*Vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, bride of the Lamb.*

**A reading from the Apocalypse of St. John, apostle.**

[Rev 21:9] Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."

[Rev 21:10] And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

[Rev 21:11] having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

[Rev 21:12] It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed;

[Rev 21:13] on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.

[Rev 21:14] And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

[Rev 21:15] And he who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls.

[Rev 21:16] The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its breadth; and he measured the city with his rod, twelve thousand stadia; its length and breadth and height are equal.

[Rev 21:17] He also measured its wall, a hundred and forty-four cubits by a man's measure, that is, an angel's.

[Rev 21:18] The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass.

[Rev 21:19] The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,

[Rev 21:20] the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the

twelfth amethyst.

[Rev 21:21] And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

[Rev 21:22] And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

[Rev 21:23] And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

[Rev 21:24] By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it,

[Rev 21:25] and its gates shall never be shut by day -- and there shall be no night there;

[Rev 21:26] they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

[Rev 21:27] But nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Ap. 21: 21; Tb. 13: 18, 13*

**R:** Your squares, Jerusalem, will be paved with pure gold; hymns of joy will be heard in you, \* and in all your houses they will sing: alleluia.

**V:** You will shine with a splendid light; to you all the nations of the earth will come and prostrate themselves;

**R:** and in all your houses they will sing: alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Nm. 50-51*

*We are children of God and we constitute only one family in Christ.*

**A reading from the dogmatic constitution “Lumen Gentium” of the Second Vatican Council on the Church.**

Fully conscious of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the pilgrim Church from the very first ages of the Christian religion has cultivated with great piety the memory of the dead, and "because it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins", also offers suffrages for them. The Church has always believed that the apostles and Christ's martyrs who had given the supreme witness of faith and charity by the shedding of their blood, are



closely joined with us in Christ, and she has always venerated them with special devotion, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holy angels. The Church has piously implored the aid of their intercession.

When we look at the lives of those who have faithfully followed Christ, we are inspired with a new reason for seeking the City that is to come and at the same time we are shown a most safe path by which among the vicissitudes of this world, in keeping with the state in life and condition proper to each of us, we will be able to arrive at perfect union with Christ, that is, perfect holiness. In the lives of those who, sharing in our humanity, are however more perfectly transformed into the image of Christ, God vividly manifests His presence and His face to men. He speaks to us in them, and gives us a sign of His Kingdom, to which we are strongly drawn. Having so great a cloud of witnesses over us and such a witness to the truth of the Gospel.

Nor is it by the title of example only that we cherish the memory of those in heaven, but still more in order that the union of the whole Church may be strengthened in the Spirit by the practice of fraternal charity. For just as Christian communion among wayfarers brings us closer to Christ, so our companionship with the saints joins us to Christ, from Whom as from its Fountain and Head issues every grace and the very life of the people of God. It is supremely fitting, therefore, that we love those friends and coheirs of Jesus Christ, who are also our brothers and extraordinary benefactors, that we render due thanks to God for them and "suppliantly invoke them and have recourse to their prayers, their power and help in obtaining benefits from God through His Son, Jesus Christ, who is our Redeemer and Saviour." For every genuine testimony of love shown by us to those in heaven, by its very nature tends toward and terminates in Christ who is the "crown of all saints," and through Him, in God Who is wonderful in his saints and is magnified in them.

For all of us, who are sons of God and constitute one family in Christ as long as we remain in communion with one another in mutual charity and in one praise of the most holy Trinity, are corresponding with the intimate vocation of the Church and partaking in foretaste the liturgy of consummate glory. For when Christ shall appear and the glorious resurrection of the dead will take place, the glory of God will light up the heavenly City and the Lamb will be the lamp thereof. Then the whole Church of the saints in the supreme happiness of charity will adore God and "the Lamb who was

slain", proclaiming with one voice: "To Him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb blessing, and honour, and glory, and dominion forever and ever".

**Responsorial.** *Act. 19: 6, 5; 12: 10*

**R:** I heard a voice in the heavens, similar to loud peals of thunder, alleluia: For our Lord God Almighty reigns, alleluia \* because the salvation, the power and the kingdom of his Christ has been accomplished, alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** From the throne came a voice that said: Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him small and great.

**R:** Because the salvation, the power and the kingdom of his Christ have been accomplished, alleluia, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 19: 1-20*

*Paul at Ephesus.*

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

[Acts 19:1] While Apol'los was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples.

[Acts 19:2] And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

[Acts 19:3] And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism."

[Acts 19:4] And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."

[Acts 19:5] On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

[Acts 19:6] And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

[Acts 19:7] There were about twelve of them in all.

[Acts 19:8] And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, arguing and pleading about the kingdom of God;

[Acts 19:9] but when some were stubborn and disbelieved, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them, taking the disciples with him, and argued daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

[Acts 19:10] This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

[Acts 19:11] And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,

[Acts 19:12] so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

[Acts 19:13] Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches."

[Acts 19:14] Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this.

[Acts 19:15] But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

[Acts 19:16] And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

[Acts 19:17] And this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks; and fear fell upon them all; and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

[Acts 19:18] Many also of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices.

[Acts 19:19] And a number of those who practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.

[Acts 19:20] So the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily.

**Responsorial.** *Act. 15: 8- 9; 11: 18*

**R:** God, who knows the hearts, has granted the Holy Spirit to them also, as he did to us. \* And he has made no distinction between them, and us purifying their hearts with the faith. Alleluia.

**V:** Therefore God has allowed the pagans also to convert so that they can have life.

**R:** And he has made no distinction between them, and us purifying their hearts with the faith. Alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Book 3*

*The anointing of the Holy Spirit.*

**A reading from the treatise “The life in Christ” of Nicholas Cabasilas.**

The work of baptism is to communicate the strength and the efficacy of the good Spirit; and the anointing itself introduces the Lord Jesus, in whom is all the salvation of men, all the hope of good; through whom the participation of the Holy Spirit and the ascent to the Father comes to us.

But that which this ointment will always get for the Christians, and which is very useful in every time, are the gifts of piety, prayer, charity, chastity and others, that are very profitable to those who receive them. This however by many Christians is not understood at all, the great importance of this sacrament remaining hidden from them, in fact, as it is written: “They had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit” (Act. 19: 2)

Some are incapable of understanding the gifts of baptism because they receive them before the suitable age; others receive them in the youth when, having turned already to the ignominious things, they have the eye of the soul blinded. Therefore the Spirit really lavishes his gifts to the baptised “distributing to each one as he wants” (1 Cor. 12: 11). Nor has the Lord stopped doing good for us, having promised to be with us until the consummation of the ages. This initiation is truly not vain and superfluous; but as we have received from the divine bath the remission of sins and from the sacred table the body of Christ, nor will these benefits cease until he who is their foundation will appear, so also it is necessary that the Christians enjoy of the most sacred ointment and it is absolutely right that they participate of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

It would not be truly suitable that, while he fills with efficacy the other sacraments, he would leave this one without fruit. How to believe with St. Paul that “he who has promised is faithful” (Heb. 10: 23) and to doubt of this? From the moment that it is necessary or not to see the good in no sacrament or to see it in all, and given that the same virtue operates in them because unique is the immolation of the unique Lamb, then it is certain that his death and his blood confer the perfection to all the sacraments. Therefore the holy Spirit has been truly given to us: to some so that they

can do good to the others and, as Paul says, to build the Church preaching the future things or communicating the mysteries, or casting out the sicknesses with their word; to others then so that they can become better, models of piety or of chastity or of extraordinary humility.

In all the initiated the sacrament operates that which is its own, even if not everyone has the knowledge of the gifts and the capacity of making good use of such riches. Many because of the immature age are not capable of grasping with the intelligence; others because they have not been prepared and do not bring the necessary dispositions.

**Responsorial.** *Ep. 1. 13-14; 2 Cor. 1: 21-22*

**R:** Because you have believed you have received the seal of the Holy Spirit that had been promised, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance, \* until the complete redemption of those whom God has acquired for himself, alleluia.

**V:** It is God himself who has conferred on us the anointing, he has set his seal on us and he has given us the deposit of the Spirit in our hearts.

**R:** Until the complete redemption of those whom God has acquired for himself, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 15: 9-11*

*Remain in my love, so that your joy may be complete.*

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

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

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

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

# FRIDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ap. 22: 1-9*

*The river of living water.*

**A reading from the Apocalypse of St. John, apostle.**

[Rev 22:1] Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

[Rev 22:2] through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

[Rev 22:3] There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him;

[Rev 22:4] they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads.

[Rev 22:5] And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

[Rev 22:6] And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.

[Rev 22:7] And behold, I am coming soon." Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

[Rev 22:8] I John am he who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me;

[Rev 22:9] but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Ap. 22: 5, 3*

**R:** There will not be night anymore, because the Lord God will illuminate his servants, \* and they will reign forever and ever, alleluia.

**V:** The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the middle of the holy city, and his servants will adore him,

**R:** and they will reign forever and ever, alleluia.

**Second Reading. Lett. 63, 8-9**

*Of the sacraments of life.*

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

But as often as water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to, as we see intimated in Isaiah: “Remember not,” says he, “the former things, and consider not the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, which shall now spring forth; and you shall know it. I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry place, to give drink to my elected people, my people whom I have purchased, that they might show forth my praise.” There God foretold by the prophet, that among the nations, in places which previously had been dry, rivers should afterwards flow plenteously, and should provide water for the elected people of God, that is, for those who were made sons of God by the generation of baptism. Moreover, it is again predicted and foretold before, that the Jews, if they should thirst and seek after Christ, should drink with us, that is, should attain the grace of baptism. “If they shall thirst,” he says, “He shall lead them through the deserts, shall bring forth water for them out of the rock; the rock shall be cloven, and the water shall flow, and my people shall drink;” which is fulfilled in the Gospel, when Christ, who is the Rock, is cloven by a stroke of the spear in His passion; who also, admonishing what was before announced by the prophet, cries and says, “If any man thirst, let him come and drink. He that believes in me, as the Scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” And that it might be more evident that the Lord is speaking there, not of the cup, but of baptism, the Scripture adds, saying, “But this He spoke of the Spirit, which they that believed in Him should receive.” For by baptism the Holy Spirit is received; and thus by those who are baptized, and have attained to the Holy Spirit, is attained the drinking of the Lord’s cup. And let it disturb no one, that when the divine Scripture speaks of baptism, it says that we thirst and drink, since the Lord also in the Gospel says, “Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness;” because what is received with a greedy and thirsting desire is drunk more fully and plentifully. As also, in another place, the Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman, saying, “Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever.” By which is also signified the very baptism of

saving water, which indeed is once received, and is not again repeated. But the cup of the Lord is always both thirsted for and drunk in the Church.

Nor is there need of very many arguments, dearest brother, to prove that baptism is always indicated by the appellation of water, and that thus we ought to understand it, since the Lord, when He came, manifested the truth of baptism and the cup in commanding that that faithful water, the water of life eternal, should be given to believers in baptism, but, teaching by the example of His own authority, that the cup should be mingled with a union of wine and water. For, taking the cup on the eve of His passion, He blessed it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Drink you all of this; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins. I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day in which I shall drink new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.” In which portion we find that the cup that the Lord offered was mixed, and that that was wine which He called His blood. Whence it appears that the blood of Christ is not offered if there be no wine in the cup, nor the Lord’s sacrifice celebrated with a legitimate consecration unless our oblation and sacrifice respond to His passion. But how shall we drink the new wine of the fruit of the vine with Christ in the kingdom of His Father, if in the sacrifice of God the Father and of Christ we do not offer wine, nor mix the cup of the Lord by the Lord’s own tradition?

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Ps. 46: 8; Ps. 131: 7*

**R:** The Lord has introduced us into his holy dwelling place and we have seen the source of water flowing milk and honey. \* We offer the first fruits, alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** Let us enter into his dwelling, let us prostrate at his footstool.

**R:** We offer the first fruits, alleluia, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 19: 21-41*

*Rebellion of Ephesus against Paul.*



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

[Acts 19:21] Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedo'nia and Acha'ia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

[Acts 19:22] And having sent into Macedo'nia two of his helpers, Timothy and Eras'tus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

[Acts 19:23] About that time there arose no little stir concerning the Way.

[Acts 19:24] For a man named Deme'trius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Ar'temis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.

[Acts 19:25] These he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth.

[Acts 19:26] And you see and hear that not only at Ephesus but almost throughout all Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable company of people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.

[Acts 19:27] And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Ar'temis may count for nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship."

[Acts 19:28] When they heard this they were enraged, and cried out, "Great is Ar'temis of the Ephesians!"

[Acts 19:29] So the city was filled with the confusion; and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Ga'ius and Aristar'chus, Macedo'nians who were Paul's companions in travel.

[Acts 19:30] Paul wished to go in among the crowd, but the disciples would not let him;

[Acts 19:31] some of the A'si-archs also, who were friends of his, sent to him and begged him not to venture into the theater.

[Acts 19:32] Now some cried one thing, some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together.

[Acts 19:33] Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, wishing to make a defense to the people.

[Acts 19:34] But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all with one voice cried out, "Great is Ar'temis of the

Ephesians!"

[Acts 19:35] And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Ar'temis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky?

[Acts 19:36] Seeing then that these things cannot be contradicted, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash.

[Acts 19:37] For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess.

[Acts 19:38] If therefore Deme'trius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against any one, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges against one another.

[Acts 19:39] But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly.

[Acts 19:40] For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, there being no cause that we can give to justify this commotion."

[Acts 19:41] And when he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. 2 Cor. 1: 8, 9*

**R:** We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in Asia. \* But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. Alleluia, alleluia.

**V:** We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure.

**R:** But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 7, 6-7*

*In the time of trials hope consoles us.*

**A reading from the "Commentary on psalm 118" of St. Ambrose, bishop.**

"This is what consoles me in my misery: your word gives me life" (Ps. 118: 50).

This is the hope, this is the consolation that came to meet me with your word, to enable me to bear the present bitterness. When Paul persecuted the Name, he did not have the consolation of hope, when instead he suffered for

the Name, he drew hope from the consolation. Listen how he consoles us after he had become a believer: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Perhaps the tribulation, anguish, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger, the sword? Exactly as it is written: Because of you we are put to death all day long, we are treated like sheep to be slaughtered” and he adds for what reason they can bear all this with patience: “But in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who has loved us” (Rm. 8: 35-37).

If therefore someone wants to overcome the adversity, persecutions, danger, death, a serious sickness, the assault of thieves, the confiscation of goods or any other thing in this world that is considered as a misfortune, he will easily overcome everything if he has the hope that consoles him. Even if these things happen, they nevertheless cannot be serious for he who says: “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Rm. 8: 18). Since he who hopes for better things is never depressed by the lighter things.

In the time of our humiliation therefore the hope that does not confuse consoles us. I believe then that the time of trial is that of the humiliation of our soul. In fact it is humiliated when it is left at the mercy of the tempter, when it has to be put to the test with hard toil, experiencing thus in the struggle and in the battle the clash of contrary forces. But in these trials it is vivified by the word of God.

This word is the vital substance of our soul; it nourishes it, makes it grow, and directs it. There is no other thing that can make the rational soul live like the word of God. In fact, in the way that the dialogue with God grows in our soul through the reception, the intelligence and the comprehension of the word, so also his life grows in us. And vice versa, when the word of God is lacking in our soul, his life also is lacking. Therefore, as the union of the soul and of the body is animated, nourished and sustained by the vital breath, so also our soul is vivified by the word of God and by the spiritual grace.

Therefore we must make an effort in every way to put aside everything, to gather in ourselves the words of God and to infuse them into our hearts, into our sentiments, into the attentions, into the thoughts and into the actions, in order to corresponds with facts to the words of the Scriptures and not to be in contradiction with the celestial precepts; in a way that we also can say: “Your word makes me live” (Ps. 118: 50).

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 93: 22; 117: 14*

**R:** The Lord is my defence, \* the rock of my refuge is my God, alleluia.

**V:** My strength and my song is the Lord, he has been my salvation.

**R:** The rock of my refuge is my God, alleluia.

**Gospel.** *Jn. 15: 12-17*

*This is what I command you, love one another.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# SATURDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ap. 22: 10-21*

*The testimony of our hope.*

**A reading from the Apocalypse of St. John, apostle.**

[Rev 22:10] And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

[Rev 22:11] Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."

[Rev 22:12] "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done.

[Rev 22:13] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

[Rev 22:14] Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

[Rev 22:15] Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and every one who loves and practices falsehood.

[Rev 22:16] "I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

[Rev 22:17] The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let him who hears say, "Come." And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price.

[Rev 22:18] I warn every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if any one adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,

[Rev 22:19] and if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

[Rev 22:20] He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

[Rev 22:21] The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

**Responsorial.** *Ap. 22: 16 – 17, 20; Is. 55: 1, 3*

**R:** I am the root of the race of David, the shining star of the morning. The Spirit and the bride say: Come! \* And he who listens repeats: Come. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, alleluia.

**V:** O all of you, who are thirsty, come to the waters. Give ear and come to me.

**R:** And he who listens repeats: Come. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, alleluia.

**Second Reading.** *Tratt. 2*

*The Eucharist, Passover of the Lord.*

**A reading from the “Treatise” of St. Gaudenzius of Brescia, bishop.**

One man died for all. In every house, that is in every Church, in the mystery of bread and wine, being sacrificed he restores us, being believed he gives us life, and being consecrated he sanctifies those who consecrate.

This is the Lamb’s flesh: this is his blood. For the Bread who came down from heaven declared: ‘The bread which I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world’. It is right that the appearance of wine should be the sign of his blood, for he said himself in the gospel: ‘I am the true wine’. These words show that any wine offered as a sign of his passion is his blood. For this reason the blessed patriarch Jacob had prophesied concerning the Messiah in these words: ‘He will wash his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes’. For he was destined to put on the garments of your body and wash them in his own blood.

He is the creator and Lord of all natures. He makes the earth yield bread, and then makes from the bread his own body; for this he promised, and this he has power to do. He made wine from water, and from wine he made his own blood.

‘It is the Lord’s Pasch’ – that is, the Lord’s Passover. For you are not to regard this heavenly effect as something earthly; it was produced through Christ, and Christ passes into it, and has made it his own body and blood.

What you receive is the body of that heavenly Bread, the blood of that sacred Vine. For when he offered the consecrated bread and the wine to his disciples, he said: ‘This is my body; this is my blood’. We believe in him; so let us believe his words. Truth cannot lie.

When Jesus was speaking to the crowd about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, they were bewildered and murmured: ‘This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?’ So to purge away with heavenly fire those

thoughts that I have just told you to avoid, he added these words: 'It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life'.

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 6: 57; Lk. 22: 19*

**R:** As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father,  
\* so whoever eats me will draw life from me, alleluia.

**V:** This is my body that will be given up for you,

**R:** so whoever eats me will draw life from me, alleluia.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Act. 20: 1-16*

*Paul abandons Ephesus.*

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

[Acts 20:1] After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples and having exhorted them took leave of them and departed for Macedo'nia.

[Acts 20:2] When he had gone through these parts and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.

[Acts 20:3] There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedo'nia.

[Acts 20:4] Sop'ater of Beroe'a, the son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalo'nians, Aristar'chus and Secun'dus; and Ga'ius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tych'icus and Troph'imus.

[Acts 20:5] These went on and were waiting for us at Tro'as,

[Acts 20:6] but we sailed away from Philip'pi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Tro'as, where we stayed for seven days.

[Acts 20:7] On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

[Acts 20:8] There were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered.

[Acts 20:9] And a young man named Eu'tychus was sitting in the window. He sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer; and being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.

[Acts 20:10] But Paul went down and bent over him, and embracing him said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him."

[Acts 20:11] And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed.

[Acts 20:12] And they took the lad away alive, and were not a little comforted.

[Acts 20:13] But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there; for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land.

[Acts 20:14] And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

[Acts 20:15] And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chi'os; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we came to Mile'tus.

[Acts 20:16] For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

**Responsorial. 2 Cor. 3: 4-6**

**R:** Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God \* who has made us ministers of a new covenant- not of the letter but of the Spirit, alleluia.

**V:** Not that we are competent of ourselves to judge anything we do, but our competence comes from God,

**R:** who has made us ministers of a new covenant -not of the letter but of the Spirit, alleluia.

**Second Reading. Cc. 66-67**

*The celebration of the Eucharist.*

**A reading from the "First Apology in favour of the Christians" of St. Justin, martyr.**

No one may share in the Eucharist except those who believe in the truth of our teachings and have been washed in the bath which confers



forgiveness of sins and rebirth, and who lives according to Christ's commands.

For we do not receive this food as ordinary bread and as ordinary drink; but just as Jesus Christ our Saviour became flesh through the word of God, and assumed flesh and blood for our salvation, so too we are taught that the food over which the prayer of thanksgiving, the word received from Christ, has been said, the food which nourishes our flesh and blood by assimilation, is the flesh and blood of this Jesus who became flesh.

The apostles in their memoirs, which are called gospels, recorded that Jesus left them these instructions: he took bread, pronounced the prayer of thanksgiving, and said: 'Do this in memorial of me. This is my body'. In the same way he took the cup, pronounced the prayer of thanksgiving, and said: 'This is my blood', and shared it among them and no one else. From that time on we have always continued to remind one another of this. Those of us who are well provided help out any who are in need, and we meet together continually. Over all our offerings we give thanks to the Creator of all through his Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

On Sundays there is an assembly of all who live in towns or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read for as long as time allows.

Then the reading is brought to an end, and the president delivers an address in which he admonishes and encourages us to imitate in our lives the beautiful lessons we have heard read.

Then we all stand up together and pray. When we have finished the prayer, as I have said, bread and wine and water are brought up; the president offers prayers and thanksgiving as best he can, and the people say 'Amen' as an expression of their agreement. Then follows the distribution of the food over which the prayer of thanksgiving has been recited; all present receive some of it, and the deacons carry some to those who are absent.

Those who are well provided for, if they wish to do so, contribute what each thinks fit; this is collected and left with the president, so that he can help the orphans and the widows and the sick, and all who are in need for any other reason, such as prisoners and visitors from abroad; in short he provides for all who are in want.

So on Sunday we all come together. This is the first day, on which God transformed darkness and matter and made the world; the day on which

Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead. For on the day before Saturday he was crucified, and on the day after Saturday, that is the Sunday, he appeared to his apostles and disciples and taught them the truths that we have put before you for your consideration.

**Responsorial.**

**R:** As he was about to pass from this world to go to the Father, \* Jesus instituted the sacrament of his body and blood as a memorial of his death, alleluia.

**V:** Distributing his body as food and his blood as drink, he said, Do this in memory of me.

**R:** Jesus instituted the sacrament of his body and blood as a memorial of his death, alleluia.

**Gospel. Jn. 15: 18-21**

*You are not of the world, but I have chosen you from the world.*

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

[John 15:18] "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

[John 15:19] If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

[John 15:20] Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

[John 15:21] But all this they will do to you on my account, because they do not know him who sent me.