

**WEEK 7**

# SUNDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 10: 14- 11:1*

*The table of the Lord and the table of the demons.*

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

Therefore, my beloved, shun the worship of idols. I speak as to sensible men; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

"All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if some one says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then out of consideration for the man who informed you, and for conscience' sake -- I mean his conscience, not yours -- do not eat it. For why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offence to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 10: 16-17*

**R:** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? \* The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

**V:** Since there is only one bread, we, though being many, are only one body: for we all partake of the one bread.

**R:** The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

**Second Reading.** *Hom. On 1 Cor. 11:19*

*What it means to eat the dinner of the Lord.*

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

From the law then and from the customs a truly marvellous custom was introduced into the church: after having listened to the word of God, after having prayed and participated together in the Eucharist, the assembly having come to an end, the faithful gathered together did not return immediately to their houses, but the rich and the more well to do, bringing food and dishes, invited the poor and, all those who had participated in the same meeting, to sit down at table together; in a way that, the common table and the respect for the place increased reciprocally the charity, with immense joy and utility for all.

The poor, in fact, obtained great consolation; the rich then enjoyed of the benevolence of the benefited and of that of God, given that they did it out of love for him; then everyone returned home rich with grace. Numerous and positive effects followed this and, that which was worth more, in every meeting charity increased always more, because of the fact that both those who gave as well as those who received, were at the same table with great reciprocal love.

With the passing of time, however, the Corinthians ruined this custom: the richer, sitting down at table separately, began to lack in respect towards the poor, not waiting even when, in order to provide in some way to their necessity, as it happens to the poor, they arrived late. Thus when finally they arrived, they found the table cleared, because while they delayed the rich

had already finished: and thus they had to go away hungry and in humiliation.

Paul, seeing that evils were ensuing from this fact and that many more would come about, corrects this wicked and impolite custom. But observe with what prudence and measure he proceeds in the correction. In the beginning he says: “In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good” (1 Cor. 11: 17). What does he mean with that “do more harm than good”? Your fathers – he said - sold their goods, their fields, their property and put everything in common with a lot of charity towards each other, you instead, who would do good to imitate them, not only do nothing of this, but you have lost also that which remained, and precisely the banquets that you were used to have in the meetings. While they put all their goods at the disposition of the poor, you instead deprive them also of the table that was allowed them.

“In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent, I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval” (1 Cor. 11: 18-19).

Pay attention to that “it is necessary that divisions come about”. What divisions? It is not said with regard to the doctrine, but with regard to the divisions at the table. In fact, after having said, “it is necessary that divisions come about,” he continues making precise to what divisions he is referring: “When you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper that you eat” (1 Cor. 11: 20). What is “to eat the supper of the Lord”? Supper of the Lord- he says- does not consist simply of eating: supper is that which the Lord handed down to us on the last night, when all the disciples were with him. In that supper truly the Lord sat together with the servants: you instead, who are all servants, are not in agreement and are divided amongst yourselves. For this he says: “it is not the Lord’s Supper that you eat”, meaning for supper of the Lord that which is consumed when all are gathered together in harmony.

**Responsorial.** *Rm. 12: 5; Ep. 4: 7; 1 Cor. 12: 13*

**R:** Though being many, we are only one body in Christ and each one belongs to all the others. \* To each one of us, above all, has been given the grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

**V:** All of us have been baptised in only one Spirit, in order to form only one body; and all of us have drunk of only one Spirit.

**R:** To each one of us, above all, has been given the grace according to the measure of the gifts of Christ.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *2 Cor. 1: 1-14.*

*Thanksgiving in the midst of tribulations.*

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

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother. To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. Why, we felt that we had received the sentence of death; but that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead; he delivered us from so deadly a peril, and he will deliver us; on him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us in answer to many prayers.

For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience that we have behaved in the world, and still more toward you, with holiness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God. For we write you nothing but what you can read and understand; I hope you will understand fully, as you have understood in part, that you can be proud of us as we can be of you, on the day of the Lord Jesus.

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 93: 18-19; 2 Cor. 1: 5*

**R:** Your grace, Lord, has sustained me. \* When I was oppressed by anguish, your comfort consoled me.

**V:** As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also through Christ our consolation abounds.

**R:** When I was oppressed by anguish, your comfort consoled me.

**Second Reading.** *Hom. 2: 6*

*The strength of the communitarian prayer.*

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

Let us then be diligent in coming together in prayer; and let us pray for one another, as the first Christians did for the Apostles. For so we both fulfil the commandment of the Lord, and are pushed unto love: and when I say love, I speak of every good thing: and also learn to give thanks with more earnestness: for they that give thanks to God for the things of others, much more will they for their own. This also was David wont to do, saying, “Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together;” (Psalm 34:3.) this the Apostle too does everywhere. Let us also labour in this; and let us show forth unto all the beneficence of God that we may get companions in the act of praise: for if when we have received any good from men, by proclaiming it forth we make them the readier to serve us: much more shall we, by telling abroad the benefits of God, draw Him on to more good-will.

And if when we have received benefits of men we stir up others also to join us in the giving of thanks, much more ought we to bring many unto God who may give thanks for us. For if Paul who had so great confidence toward God does this, much more is it necessary for us to do it.

Let us then exhort the saints to give thanks for us; and let us do the same ourselves for one another. To priests especially this good work belongs, since it is an exceeding privilege. For drawing near, we first give thanks for the whole world and the good things common to all. For even though the blessings of God be common, yet does the common preservation include your own; so that you both owe common thanksgivings for your own peculiar blessing, and for the common blessings you should of right render up your own peculiar praise: for He makes the sun shine not for you alone, but also for all in common; but nevertheless you for your part have it whole. For it was made so large for the common good; and yet you individually see it as large as all men have seen it; so that you owe a thanksgiving as great as all together; and you ought to give thanks for what all have in common and likewise for the virtue of others; for on account of others, too, we receive many blessings: for had there been found in Sodom ten righteous only, they would not have suffered what they did. So then let us give thanks also for the confidence of others toward God. For this custom is an ancient one, planted in the Church from the beginning. Thus Paul also gives thanks for the Romans, (Romans 1:8.) for the Corinthians, (1 Corinthians 1:4.) for the whole world, (1 Timothy 2:1.) And tell me not, “The good work is none of mine;” for though it is not yours, yet even so you ought to give thanks that your member is such a one. And besides, by your acclamation you make it yours, and share in the crown, and shall yourself also receive the gift.

On this account it is that the laws of the Church command prayer also to be thus made, and that not for the faithful only, but also for the Catechumens. For the law stirs up the faithful to make supplication for the uninitiated. For when the Deacon says, “Let us pray earnestly for the Catechumens,” he does nothing else other than excite the whole multitude of the faithful to pray for them; although the Catechumens are as yet aliens. For they are not yet of the Body of Christ, they have not yet partaken of the Mysteries, but are still divided from the spiritual flock. But if we ought to intercede for these, much more for our own members.

**Responsorial.** *Jam. 5: 16; 1 Thes. 5. 17*

**R:** Pray for one another in order to be healed. \* The prayer of the righteous man is powerful and effective.

**V:** Pray unceasingly.

**R:** The prayer of the righteous man is powerful and effective.

YEAR A

**Gospel.** *Mt. 5: 38 – 48*

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

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**Third Reading.** *Nn. 12 – 13, 15*

*Our works proclaim the goodness of God.*

**A reading from the treatise “On jealousy and envy” of St. Cyprian, bishop and martyr.**

We must remember with which name Christ called his people, with what title he denominated his flock. He calls them sheep, so that the innocence of the Christians may be in conformity to the nature of the sheep; he calls them lambs so that the simplicity of the mind could imitate the simple nature of the lambs. Why does the wolf hide itself under the guise of a sheep, why does he who gives lie to his Christian name bring disgrace to the flock of Christ? Is it not betraying God to bear the name of Christ and not walk in the footsteps of Christ, and to abandon the way of salvation? He himself in fact teaches and affirms that he who has observed the



commandments will reach life, and that he who will have listened and obeyed his words is wise; and again that he who will have taught and done as he taught will be called the greatest teacher in the kingdom; and that when that which is announced with the mouth is confirmed by the actions, it will be to the advantage of the preacher for having preached well and with profit.

What was it that the Lord so often inculcated into the hearts of his disciples, what was it that he greatly commanded them to keep and to observe among the salutary admonitions and the heavenly precepts, if not that we love one another with the same love with which he has loved his disciples? But how can he who because of jealousy cannot be an operator of peace or loveable maintain the peace and the charity of Christ?

For this also Paul the apostle, enumerating the merits of peace and charity, after having affirmed with strength that neither faith, nor almsgiving, or the sufferings of the confessor and martyrdom itself would have been of any use to him if he had not maintained integral and inviolate the necessities of love, adds: "Love is patient, is kind; is not envious" (1 Cor. 13: 4), teaching in this way and demonstrating that, only he who is generous and kind and who keeps himself far away from envy and from jealousy, can preserve charity. So also in another passage, exhorting the man who is already full of the Holy Spirit and who has become the son of God through baptism, to search always for that which is spiritual and divine, he adds: "Brothers I could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh – mere infants in Christ. You are still of the flesh. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not of the flesh? Are you not acting like mere men?" (1 Cor. 3: 1, 3).

We cannot dress ourselves with the image of the heavenly man if we do not demonstrate a similarity to Christ, right from the beginning of our spiritual life. This signifies changing that which you were, and starting to be that which you were not, so that your divine childhood may shine in you. The paternity of God must be confirmed by the behaviour of the sons of God, so that God may be glorified and praised in man exactly for his conduct of life. God himself exhorts and admonishes us to this, promising reciprocity to those who glorify him; he says in fact: "He who honours me, I also will honour him, he who despises me will be an object of contempt" (1 Sam. 2: 30). In order to prepare ourselves and to model ourselves to this glorification, the Lord, Son of God, in the gospel offers us the image of God

the Father, saying: "You have heard that it was said: Love your neighbour and hate your enemy; but I tell you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5: 43-45).

**Responsorial.** *Mt. 5: 44 – 45; Ep. 4: 32*

**R:** Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you \* that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

**V:** Be kind to one another, merciful, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you in Christ,

**R:** that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

YEAR B

**Gospel.** *Mk. 2: 1 – 12*

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

And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" -- he said to the paralytic -- "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

**Third Reading. Book 3: 5- 6**

*All these things are fulfilled by the consecrated hands of the presbyters.*

**A reading from the treatise “On the Priesthood” of St. John Chrysostom, bishop.**

If one considers within himself how great it is that a simple man made of flesh and blood, has been elevated to participate to that holy and immortal divine nature, he will certainly understand with how much honour the grace of the Holy Spirit has covered the priests. In fact they do not occupy themselves with anything else other than that which regards our dignity and our salvation. And though dwelling and remaining on the earth, they are entrusted with dispensing the things of heaven, and have received a power that God did not give either to the angels or to the archangels. To these in fact it has not been said: “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Mt. 18: 18).

Certainly the princes of the earth have the power to bind, but only the bodies; this bond instead touches the soul and transcends the heavens, while God from on high confirms all that the priests do on the earth: the Lord himself ratifies the sentence of his servants.

He in fact, gave them all power over the heavenly things when he said: “If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven” (Jn. 20: 23). What power is there that is greater than this? “The Father has entrusted all judgement to the Son” (Jn. 5: 22), and I see that all judgement has been transmitted to the priests of the Son. They have been raised up to such a power, as if they were already transported into heaven and had transcended the human nature, freed from our passions. Since no one can enter into the kingdom of heaven unless he has been regenerated by water and by the Spirit (cfr. Jn. 5: 22), and he who does not eat the flesh of the Lord and does not drink his blood does not have eternal life in him (cfr. Jn. 6: 53); if all these things cannot be accomplished except by the consecrated hands of the priests: who without their work could flee from the fire of hell or obtain the crowns reserved for the elect?

To them, exactly to them, has been entrusted the mission of the spiritual births, of regenerating the souls through baptism, through them we are clothed with Christ and, buried with the Son of God, we become members of that blessed head. They are the authors of our divine generation, of that

truly blessed regeneration which gives us the true freedom, which is of the adoption according to the grace.

**Responsorial.** *Mt. 28: 18; Jn. 20: 22-23; 3: 35*

**R:** All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me: \* receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive anyone his sins they are forgiven and if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.

**V:** The Father loves the Son and has handed everything over to him:

**R:** receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive anyone his sins they are forgiven and if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.

YEAR C

**Gospel.** *Lk. 6: 27 – 38*

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

"But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish.

Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

**Third Reading.** *Disc. 17: 1 – 4*

*Your divine benefactor wants you to be generous.*

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

In order to live according to the gospel, dearly beloved, it is very useful to know the ancient Law, both because some of its norms have passed into the new discipline, and because the religious practise of the Church itself demonstrates that the Lord Jesus did not come to abolish the Law, but to bring it to fulfilment (Mt. 5: 17).

In fact, the signs which pre-announced the coming of our Saviour having declined, and the figures having been accomplished – having disappeared with the appearance of the Truth, - all the prescriptions that were prompted by piety both as a norm of conduct as well as to ensure the purity of the divine cult, remain in force even for us in the same form: all that which was good for one as well as for the other Testament did not undergo change of any kind.

Therefore, the prayer accompanied by the works of mercy are always very efficacious with God, since he who does not withdraw his attention for the poor man immediately draws the attention of God to himself, the Lord having said: “Be merciful, as your Father is merciful, forgive and you will be forgiven” (Lk. 6: 36, 37). What is more loveable than this justice? What sentence is more indulgent than this in which the judgement is left in the power of the one who has to be judged? “Give, and it will be given to you” (Lk. 6: 38). How the preoccupations of distrust and the hesitation of avarice fall soon, in a way that man can give with tranquillity that which the Truth has committed himself to repay.

Be perseverant, you Christian who gives alms. Give and you will receive, sow and you will reap, scatter and you will gather. Do not be afraid to spend, do not anguish yourself as if the fruit were uncertain. Your substance, if it is well distributed, will increase. Desire the just gain of mercy and trade it for eternal life.

Your remunerator wants you to be generous and it is he who gives so that you may have, he commands you to give, saying: “Give, and it will be given to you”.

Embrace and welcome with joy the condition put forward by this promise. In fact, even if “ you possess nothing that you have not received” (1 Cor. 4: 7), yet you cannot not possess that which you will have given. He therefore who loves money and desires to increase enormously his riches,

let him rather exercise this holy usury and let him enrich himself with the astuteness of these earnings. Do not exploit the needs of the one who is in difficulty so that the false help which hides deception may not make him fall into the traps of insoluble debts, but may make him a creditor and usurer of the one who said: "Give, and it will be given to you, for with the measure with which you measure, it will be measured for you in exchange" (Lk. 6: 38).

And in this way, dearly beloved, you who have believed with all your heart to the promises of God must flee the impure leprosy of avarice and use the gifts of God with love and wisdom. And since you enjoy of his generosity, act in a way that you may make others also participants of your happiness.

**Responsorial.** *Lk. 6: 35-36; Ps. 144: 8*

**R:** The Most High is kind towards the ungrateful and the wicked. \* Be merciful, as your Father is merciful.

**V:** The Lord is patient and merciful, slow to anger and rich in grace.

**R:** Be merciful, as your Father is merciful.

# MONDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 11:2-16*

*Women in the community of faithful.*

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

I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonours her head -- it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil.

For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels.

Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her pride? For her hair is given to her for a covering. If any one is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 11: 11-12; Gen. 1: 27*

**R:** In the Lord the woman is not independent of man or man of woman. \*  
As in fact woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman, and all things are from God.

**V:** God created man in his own image; male and female he created them.

**R:** As in fact woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman, and all things are from God.

**Second Reading.** *Ps. 45: 17*

*The head of man is Christ.*

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

It was God, who was anointed by God: you hear of an “Anointed” one; understand it to mean “Christ.” For the name of “Christ” comes from “chrism;” this name by which He is called “Christ” expresses “unction:” nor were kings and prophets anointed in any kingdom, in any other place, save in that kingdom where Christ was prophesied of, where He was anointed, and from whence the Name of Christ was to come. It is found nowhere else at all: in no one nation or kingdom. God, then, anointed God. With what oil was He anointed, but a spiritual one?

For the visible oil is in the sign, the invisible oil is in the mystery; the spiritual oil is within. “God” then was “anointed” for us, and sent unto us; and God Himself was man, in order that He might be “anointed:” but He was man in such a way as to be God still.

He was God in such a way as not to disdain to be man. “True man and true God;” in nothing deceitful, in nothing false, as being everywhere true, everywhere “the Truth” itself. God then is man; and it was for this cause that “God” was “anointed,” because God was Man, and became “Christ.”

This was figured in Jacob’s placing a stone at his head, and so sleeping. The patriarch Jacob had placed a stone at his head: sleeping with that stone at his head, he saw heaven opened, and a ladder from heaven to earth, and Angels ascending and descending (cfr. Gen. 28: 12); after this vision he awoke, anointed the stone, and departed. In that “stone” he understood Christ; for that reason he anointed it.

Take notice what it is whereby Christ is preached. What is the meaning of that anointing of a stone, especially in the case of the Patriarchs who worshipped but One God? It was however done as a figurative act: and he departed. For he did not anoint the stone, and come to worship there constantly, and to perform sacrifice there. It was the expression of a mystery; not the commencement of sacrilege.



And notice the meaning of “the stone.” “The Stone which the builders refused, this has become the cornerstone.” (Ps. 117: 22; Mt. 21: 42). And since the head of man is Christ, the stone refers to the head.

Notice here a great mystery. The “Stone” is Christ. Peter calls Him “a living Stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God.” (1 Pet. 2: 4). And the stone is set at “the head,” because “Christ is the Head of the man.” And “the stone” was anointed, because “Christ” was so called from His being anointed.

**Responsorial.** *1 Jn. 2: 20, 27; 2 Cor. 1: 21, 22*

**R:** But you have an anointing from the Holy One; may the anointing that you have received remain in you, \* and you do not need anyone to teach you, but his anointing teaches you everything and does not lie.

**V:** God has conferred on us the anointing, he has impressed his seal on us and he has given us the guarantee of the Spirit in our hearts.

**R:** And you do not need anyone to teach you, but his anointing teaches you everything and does not lie.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *2 Cor. 1:14b- 2:11*

*Why Paul has changed itinerary.*

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

As you have understood in part, that you can be proud of us as we can be of you, on the day of the Lord Jesus.

Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a double pleasure; I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans like a worldly man, ready to say Yes and No at once?

As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we preached among you, Silva'nus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No; but in him it is always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why we utter the Amen through him, to the glory of God. But it is God who establishes us with you

in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

But I call God to witness against me -- it was to spare you that I refrained from coming to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. For I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

But if any one has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure --not to put it too severely -- to you all. For such a one this punishment by the majority is enough; so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything.

Any one whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, to keep Satan from gaining the advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 1: 21-22; Deut. 5: 2, 4*

**R:** It is God himself who confirms us in Christ, and he has conferred on us the anointing, he has put his seal upon us, \* and he has given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

**V:** The Lord our God has established a covenant with us, he has spoken face to face with us.

**R:** and he has given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 14:7 – 8*

*The apostles preached Jesus crucified.*

**A reading from the “Discourses” of Eusebius of Emesa, bishop.**

Two men, without a supply of food, without money, without a change of clothes, entered into the city. Who do you think would receive them?

Where would the door be opened to them? Who would know them? What task was prepared for them and where? Do you not admire the power of he who sent them and the faith of those who were sent? Two foreigners entered into the city. What did they carry? What did they preach? He has been crucified, they said.

In front of the Jews they were persons of low extraction, uneducated, without studies, poor. But their preaching was the cross; here is the faith! The valour triumphed in the obstacles: the cross was proclaimed, and the temples were destroyed; the cross is proclaimed, and the kings are overcome. The cross is proclaimed, and the wise are convinced of error, the pagan feasts abolished and the idols burnt.

You marvel that credit was given to the apostles, or that those were able to believe, that they were converted, that they had welcomed them?

Let these marvellous facts not pass us by unobserved. Strange men, unknown, lacking in knowledge and of amazing newness, went around the world preaching the crucified, proposing fasting in the place of gluttony, an uncomfortable sobriety in the place of the sensuality. And those realities were quite heavy, for those who had been called to accept these noble exhortations in the place of the degrading customs. Yet it had a hold on the persons and power over the communities of the small towns. What treasure did they have? The power of the cross. He who had sent them, had not given them gold: an abundance of this was already to be found with the kings. He gave them instead that which was impossible for the kings to purchase or possess: to mortal men he gave the gift of resurrecting the dead; to them, subjected to sicknesses, he gave the power to free the others. A king cannot bring a soldier back to life, and a king also gets sick.

Instead he who sent them, has the power to resurrect the dead and to heal the sick. Examine attentively the riches of the kings and that of the apostles. See the diversity of condition: the king is a famous man, the apostles are poor men; but though being mortals, they operate divine things through divine virtue.

If someone then does not believe that the apostles had operated miracles, the wonder increases all the more. If in fact they resurrected the dead, gave sight to the blind, made the lame walk and cleansed the lepers, through these signs they eliminated the irreligiousness and planted the faith; he who does not believe these signs of which there is a written testimony is to be marvelled at. Before the crucifixion the disciples did not operate

anything; afterwards yes. If they had done something before the crucifixion, they did it secretly; but they performed them clearly when the divine blood destroyed the token document which weighed down on us; when the impure were washed with the blood; when the death was killed by death, when God made man overcome he who devoured men; when obedience killed sin; when through one man, Adam was recalled to life; when through the Virgin sin was cancelled.

They listen to the apostles, the shadows awaken the men who sleep: the divine power, in fact, fills those to whom it is shown. They were not any more what they were before, that which we were: they were re-vested. And as the iron before coming into contact with fire is cold and similar to other iron, but when it is put into the fire and has become incandescent loses its cold nature and emits another from itself, in the same way do the mortals who have been re-vested with Jesus Christ behave. Thus Paul teaches saying: "It is not I who live anymore"- I have died an excellent death- "but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2: 20).

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

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

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

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

**Gospel.** *Mk. 9: 14-29*

*I believe Lord, help me in my disbelief.*

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

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd about them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and ran up to him and greeted him.

And he asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" And one of the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams

and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."

And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

# TUESDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 11: 17- 34*

*The supper of the Lord.*

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

But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you assemble as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

When you meet together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk.

What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.

That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we should not be judged. But when the Lord judges us, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another -- if any one is hungry, let him eat at home -- lest you come together

to be condemned. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 11: 24, 25; cfr. Mt. 26: 26*

**R:** Take and eat: this is my body, which is for you: \* Do this in remembrance of me.

**V:** This cup is the New Covenant in my blood.

**R:** Do this in remembrance of me.

**Second Reading.** *Hom. On 1 Cor. 11: 19*

*The mystical table.*

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

After having demonstrated that the Corinthians are guilty of many faults, Paul passes to a calmer tone, abandoning the vehemence of the beginning. Therefore in order to inspire greater fear in them he brings the discourse to the mystical table and says: “I in fact, have received all that I have taught you from the Lord” (1 Cor. 11: 23). What is the relation? Does he speak of a common supper and recall the great mystery? Certainly, he says.

If in fact that tremendous table is placed without exception in front of everyone, to the rich and to the poor and neither does the rich man receive more or the poor man less, but their dignity is equal and so is the right to gain access to it; and until all have eaten of the sacred spiritual banquet, nothing of all that which is placed on the table is taken away, all the priests are there, awaiting also for the poorest and the miserable; with greater reason should the same happen in this common supper. For this, I have remembered that supper of the Lord: “I, in fact, have received from the Lord that which in turn I have transmitted to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread and, after having given thanks, he broke it and said: This is my body, which is for you; do this in memory of me. In the same way, after having dined, he took the chalice also saying: This chalice is the New Covenant in my blood” (1 Cor. 11: 23-25).

Therefore, after having lingered a bit on those who participate unworthily in the mystery and having severely reproached them by showing them their guilt and saying that he who eats and drinks unworthily, without recognizing the body and the blood of the Lord, goes to meet the same

condemnation of those who killed Christ, he brings the discourse back to the first argument and says: “Therefore, my brothers, when you gather together for the supper, wait for one another. And if someone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgement” (1 Cor. 11: 33-34). He concludes the discourse with the fear of the judgement: “So that when you meet together it may not result in judgement”, that is to your condemnation. It is neither a food –he says – nor a table that can allow the humiliation of the brother, the lack of respect for the assembly, a lot of greediness and intemperance. These things do not turn to joy, but in torment and punishment: you attract in fact a great vengeance when you offend the brothers and despise the Church, making of the holy place your house and eating by yourselves. You also listen, brothers, close the mouths of those who interpret rashly the words and the doctrine of the apostles, correct those who use the Scriptures for their own good and for the harm of the others. You know well of what he speaks when he said: “It is necessary that divisions take place among you” (1 Cor. 11: 19): he does not intend the controversies that can arise about the sacred table, but rather that while “one is hungry, the other is drunk” (1 Cor. 11: 21).

With sincere faith, let us give witness to a life that is coherent with the doctrine and of a great kindness towards the poor, taking a lot to heart the destitute. Let us take care of the interests of the spirit, and let us not try to have more than what is necessary for ourselves.

Riches, gain, inexhaustible treasures for us are this: that we transfer to heaven all that which belongs to us, tranquil with regard to the security of such a deposit.

And after having lived this life according to his will, may we all obtain the grace of his encounter and the eternal joy of those who have been saved by the grace and mercy of our true God and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power, with the Father and his Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

**Responsorial.** *Mt. 26: 26; Prv. 9: 5*

**R:** While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: \* Take and eat, this is my body.

**V:** Come, eat my bread, drink the wine that I have prepared.

**R:** Take and eat, this is my body.



## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *2 Cor. 2:12- 3:6*

*Paul minister of the New Covenant.*

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

When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord; but my mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia. But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.

Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ. Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all men; and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 3: 4, 6, 5*

**R:** We have faith in front of God through Christ, \* who has made us adept ministers of a New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit.

**V:** Not that we by ourselves are capable of thinking of something as coming from us, but our capacity comes from God,

**R:** who has made us adept ministers of a New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit.

**Second Reading. Ps. 92:2**

*We are the aroma of Christ.*

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

You know well, brothers, that when our Lord became man and preached the gospel, some were pleased and others no. There was a diversity of opinion among the Jews “Some said: He is good! Others instead: No, he deceives the people!” (Jn. 7: 12). Some therefore spoke well of him, others grumbled, were ironic and sarcastic and challenged him.

For those therefore who were pleased with him “he covered himself with splendour”, for those who were not pleased with him “he girded himself with power” (Ps. 92. 1). And you imitate your Lord, in order to be like the cloak with which he girds himself: be splendour for those to whom good works are pleasing, be strength for the detractors.

Hear how the Apostle Paul, follower of his Lord, also had splendour and strength. “We are the aroma of Christ- he says- among those who are being saved and those who are perishing” (2 Cor. 2: 15). Those who love good in fact are saved, those who despise it perish. For his part, he had the good aroma; in fact, he was the good aroma. But, poor are those who get lost because they have taken themselves away from the grace of the good aroma!

He does not say: for these we are a pleasant aroma, for those unpleasant, but: We are the good aroma of Christ in the whole world, among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. And immediately he adds: “to the one we are the smell of death for death and to the other the fragrance of life for life” (2 Cor. 2: 16)

For those to whom he was the aroma of life for the life he was clothed with splendour; for those to whom he was the aroma of death for death, he was clothed with strength.

If you rejoice when men praise you and approve of your good works, while when they blame you, you stop doing good and think that you have almost lost the fruit of good works because you find that they criticise you, then you are not a steady person: you do not belong to the earth that “will never be shaken” (Ps. 92: 1).

“The Lord clothes himself, girds himself with strength”: of all this St. Paul also says: “With the weapons of justice to the right and to the left”. I have seen where the splendour is and where the strength. “In the glory and in the dishonour” (2 Cor. 6: 7-8): in the success, splendid; in the dishonour, strong.

He was proclaimed worthy of glory by some, by others he was despised as despicable. To those who welcomed him he conferred beauty, against those who despised him he was strength. And thus he explains up to the end of the passage, when he says that the apostles are like “people who have nothing, and yet we possess everything” (2 Cor. 6: 10). When he has everything he is covered with splendour, when he has nothing he is girded with strength.

**Responsorial.** *Act. 20: 21; 24; Rm. 1: 16*

**R:** Entreating you to believe in the Lord Jesus, \* I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me, the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.

**V:** I am not ashamed of the gospel.

**R:** I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me, the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.

**Gospel.** *Mk. 9:30-37*

*The Son of Man is about to be handed over.*

*If anyone wants to be first, let him be the last of all.*

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

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to ask him.

And they came to Capernaum-um; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

## WEDNESDAY

### CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 12:1-11*

*There is a diversity of spiritual gifts, but only one Spirit.*

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

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were heathen, you were led astray to dumb idols, however you may have been moved. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, "Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

One and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills, inspires all these.

**Responsorial.** *Ep. 4: 17; 1 Cor. 12: 11, 4*

**R:** To each one of us has been given the grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ; but all these things are worked by the one and same Spirit, \* who distributes to each one as he wants.

**V:** There is diversity of spiritual gifts, but only one is the Spirit.

**R:** who distributes to each one as he wants.

**Second Reading. *Treatise 15***

*Charity does not search for its own interests, but that of Jesus Christ.*

**A reading from the treatise “The cenobitic life” of Baldwin of Canterbury, bishop.**

The institution of the common life is anchored and stands on a steady and well-grounded principle of authority. The Church was founded on the common life of the first Christians, in fact its infancy had its beginning from the common life. The common life drew the model of its existence, the title of its honour, the privilege of its dignity, the testimony of its authority, its justification, the strength of its wisdom from the apostles themselves.

Though being many, we are only one body, the one a member of the other. Only one spirit animates our entire body, flowing through the members, the joints and the structure; and produces the common peace from which, in its turn, is guaranteed the unity of the spirit; it conserves the members in the respect towards each other and in mutual patience. Most beloved brothers in Christ, to what do these examples push us, if not to reciprocal tolerance, to reciprocal humility, to mutual charity? Has not God perhaps written the law of love inside us, which teaches us to know ourselves? He has given us the law, he gives us also the blessings, in order to make us grow in the innocence of the heart, and with the discernment of our actions he guides us along the paths of peace, so as to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace in order to conserve the love of God in the love of the neighbour.

If unanimously and by mutual consent, according to the purity of our profession, we love God, without doubt his charity will diffuse itself in our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit (cfr. Rm. 5: 5). And the unique Spirit of God will vivify us like only one body, in a way that no one of us lives anymore for himself, but for God; so that all together, through the unique Spirit which dwells in us, we live in the unity of the Spirit.

This unity of spirit which is found in us on the strength of the love of God, conserves us then through the love of the neighbour which makes us remain in the love of God; remaining in this love, we dwell in God and God in us (cfr. 1 Jn. 4: 16). With the love of the neighbour therefore, as through a knot of love and a bond of peace, the love of God and the unity of the

spirit is maintained and conserved in us. He who does not love the brother moves himself away from the unity of the spirit, does not love God and does not live of the Spirit of God, but of his own spirit, because he does not live anymore for God, but for himself.

The common life favours the love of the neighbour and, where this love is perfect, the common life is also perfect; there is no perfect common life if there is no communion of all things, as it is written: “They had everything in common” (Act. 2: 44). But what follows can amaze us: “Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need” (Act. 2: 45). In what way was everything common to them, if each one had something of his own? The Apostle makes the question even more problematic when he says: “Now to each man the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Cor. 12: 7) and “each man has his own gift from God, one has this gift, another has that” (1 Cor. 7: 7). And again: “There are a diversity of spiritual gifts, diversity of ministries, diversity of workings” (1 Cor. 12: 4, 5, 6). How therefore can there be a communion of everything if there is so much diversity of graces, if each one has his gift?

But if each one has his own gift from God, let him behave in a way that he does not have it only for himself, but for God and for the neighbour: for God, in a way that from the gift of God he does not try to obtain his own glory but that of God; for the neighbour, searching always for the common utility and not his own. “Charity” in fact “does not search for its own interest” (1 Cor. 13: 5) but that of Jesus Christ.

**Responsorial.** Act. 4: 32; 2: 45

**R:** All the believers were one in mind and heart. \* No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

**V:** Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

**R:** No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** 2 Cor. 3: 7 – 4:4

*The glory of the New Covenant.*

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

Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such splendour that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness, fading as this was, will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendour? For if there was splendour in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation of righteousness must far exceed it in splendour. Indeed, in this case, what once had splendour has come to have no splendour at all, because of the splendour that surpasses it. For if what faded away came with splendour, what is permanent must have much more splendour.

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendour. But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains un-lifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. We have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways; we refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 3: 18; Phil. 3: 3*

**R:** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, \* are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.

**V:** We who render the cult moved by the Spirit of God and who glory in Christ Jesus,

**R:** are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.

**Second Reading.** *Book 3:14*



*The truth of the Lord remains forever.*

**A reading from the book “The Imitation of Christ”**

Over my head, O Lord, you thunder forth your judgements and shake all my bones with fear and trembling; and my soul is exceedingly terrified.

I stand astonished and consider that the heavens are not pure in your sight.

If in the angels you found wickedness, and did not spare even them, what shall become of me?

Stars fell from heaven; and I, dust that I am, how can I presume?

They whose works seemed praiseworthy have fallen to the very lowest depths. I have seen those who ate the bread of angels delighted with the husks of swine.

There is, then, no sanctity, if you, O Lord, withdraw your hand.

No wisdom avails, if you cease to govern us.

No strength is of any assistance, if you cease to preserve us. For left to ourselves we sink and perish; but visited by you, we are raised up and live.

We are unstable, but you strengthen us; we are lukewarm, but you make us fervent.

All vainglory is swallowed up in the depths of your judgements over me.

What is all flesh in your sight? Shall the clay glory against him that formed it?

How can he be exalted by empty praise, whose heart is truly subjected to God?

The whole world will not exalt the man whom the truth has subjected to itself.

Neither will the man who puts his whole hope in God be moved by the words of any that praise him.

For the speakers themselves, lo, they are all nothing, for they shall pass away with the sound of their words; but the truth of the Lord abides forever.

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 118: 115; 114, 113*

**R:** Leave me, you who do evil; I will keep God’s command. \* Lord you are my shelter, my shield, I hope in your word.

**V:** I have no love for half-hearted men; my love is for your law.

**R:** Lord you are my shelter, my shield, I hope in your word.

**Gospel. Mk. 9: 38- 40**

*Whoever is not against us is for us.*

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

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us.

# THURSDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 12: 12- 31a*

*The functions of the members of the body.*

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

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honourable we invest with the greater honour, and our un-presentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

**Responsorial.** 1 Cor. 12: 12, 27, 26

**R:** As the body, though being one, has many members and all the members, though being many, are only one body, so also Christ. \* You are the body of Christ and its members.

**V:** If one member suffers, all the members suffer together; and if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with him.

**R:** You are the body of Christ and its members.

**Second Reading.** Hom. 30:1 – 2

*The Church is similar to the human body.*

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

“For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ” (1 Cor. 12: 12). Paul, after having clearly demonstrated the unity of the body in all of its members, concludes: “so also is Christ.” And when he should have said, “so also is the Church,” for this was the natural consequence he does not say it but instead of it places the name of Christ, carrying the discourse up on high and appealing more and more to the hearer’s reverence.

But his meaning is this: “So also is the body of Christ, which is the Church.” For as the body and the head are one man, so he said that the Church and Christ are one. Wherefore also he said Christ instead of the Church, giving that name to His body. “As then,” he says, “our body is one thing though it be composed of many: so also in the Church we all are one thing. For though the Church be composed of many members, yet these many form one body.”

After having reassured and lifted up with this common example he who had the impression of being inferior to the others, he abandons the common language in order to elevate himself to speak of another head, of the spiritual head, and he offers us a much greater reason for joy showing us the complete equality which comes to us from the dignity of the head.

And which is this body? “In reality all of us have been baptized in only one Spirit, in order to form only one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or freemen” (1 Cor. 12: 13).

That is: that which has made us only one body and which has regenerated us is one unique Spirit; it has not happened that one has been baptized in one spirit, the other in another. Not only then is he who baptizes us one, but one is also he in whom we are baptized, that is through whom we are baptized. We have not been baptized, in fact, so that we could become different bodies, but so that all of us could cooperate together to the perfect connection of one unique body, that is we could form only one body.

And thus, one is he who has built the body and one is the body that has been built. He does not say: so that we are one and the same body; but: so that we are only one body. Always, in fact, Paul is worried about expressing himself with the greatest clarity.

“And we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many” (1 Cor. 12: 13-14). We participate in the same mystery, we eat the same food. And why does he not say: we eat the same body and we drink the same blood? Because, saying “Spirit” he indicates both the body and the blood together. Through the body and the blood we drink of only one Spirit.

All of us have drunk of only one Spirit, we have received the same grace. If therefore only one Spirit has united us, it has also united us in one unique body. This is exactly what “We have been baptized in order to form only one body” signifies.

He has given us only one food and he has given us to drink the same water; this is what “We have drunk of only one Spirit” means.

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 12: 6-7, 27*

**R:** There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men: \* and to each man the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

**V:** You are the body of Christ and his members, each one of you is a part of it.

**R:** And to each man the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *2 Cor. 4:5- 18*

*The fragility and faith of Paul.*

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

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day.

For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 4: 6; Deut. 5: 24*

**R:** God who said: Let the light shine out of darkness, \* has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

**V:** Behold, the Lord your God has shown us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice.

**R:** He has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

**Second Reading.** *Ps. 43: 89 – 90*

*The light of your countenance is imprinted on us.*

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

“Why do you turn away your face?” (Ps. 43: 25). We think that God turns his face away from us when we are suffering, so that darkness is poured out in our hearts and we are so hindered by the darkness that we are unable to look upon the radiance of truth. But if God touches our intellect and deigns to visit our mind we are sure that nothing is able to bring darkness upon us. The countenance of a man shines out more than the other parts of his body, and whenever we see someone either we come to know him if he is a stranger, or recognize him as one we know. How much more then does the countenance of God illuminate him on whom he looks?

As in his other teaching so here the apostle has something notable to say about this. He is truly an interpreter of Christ, bringing him to our understanding with apt ideas and words. He says: “The God who said, ‘Out of darkness the light shall shine’, is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts, to bring us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory, shining in the face of Christ” (2 Cor. 4: 6). We have heard then where Christ shines in us: he is the eternal brightness of soul whom the Father sent into the world that we might be illuminated by his face and so be able to look upon eternal and heavenly truths – we who before were imprisoned in earthly darkness.

Why am I speaking about Christ when even Peter the apostle said to the cripple lame from birth: “Look on us”? (Act. 3: 4). He then looked at Peter, and found light by the grace of faith: nor would he have been restored to health unless he had believed in faith.

Now, when there was so much glory to be seen among the apostles, Zachaeus, hearing that the Lord Jesus was passing by, climbed up into a tree, because he was himself a small slight man and could not see Jesus in the crowd. He saw Christ and he found light, he saw him and he who had been robbing others of their goods now was happy to give away his own!

“Why do you turn away your face?” (Ps. 43: 25). Even if you do turn your face from us, O Lord, yet the light of your countenance is imprinted upon us.

We keep this in our hearts and it glows in our inmost will, nor can anyone survive if you turn away your face.

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 4: 7; Heb. 10: 32*

**R:** Many say: Who will make us see good? \* Let the light of your face shine on us, Lord.

**V:** Remember the days gone by, when you endured great sufferings after you had been newly enlightened;

**R:** Let the light of your face shine on us, Lord.

**Gospel.** *Mk. 9: 41-50*

*It is better for you to enter into life without a hand  
than to go to hell with two hands.*

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

For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward. "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

For every one will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."



# FRIDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *1 Cor. 12:31 – 13: 13*

*The greatest of all is charity.*

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

Dearly beloved, I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love, these three things abide; but the greatest of these is love.

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

**R:** We have believed in the love that God has for us: \* God is love: he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God dwells in him.

**V:** Let us love one another, because love is from God.

**R:** God is love: he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God dwells in him.

**Second Reading.** *Book 9:2*

*In the Church which is the body of Christ,  
each of us has different jobs.*

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

Let each one reflect and try to understand what is the measure of the grace of God that he has deserved to reach through faith. One has received from God the gift of exercising charity, or visiting or using mercy towards the poor, or curing the sick, or defending the widows and the orphans, or with the solicitude towards the guests. God has dispensed to each one these gifts according to the measure of faith.

But if he who has received one of these gifts does not know the measure of the grace granted to him, and pretends instead to be an expert in the wisdom of God, in the doctrine or in the most profound science of which he has not received the gift, and instead of learning wants to even teach things that in reality he does not know, he is not only ignorant but is also presumptuous.

He lacks the discretion that should keep “each one according to the measure of faith that God has given him” (Rm. 12: 3). In fact, in order to be more clear, the apostle puts forward an example: “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rm. 12: 4- 5). He thus structures in an excellent way the whole body of the Church.

As every member of the body has its own function and each one fulfils its own task, nor can it happen that it does not collaborate mutually in reciprocal accord, so also in the Church, which is the body of Christ, each one of us has a different function. One, for example, applies himself to the study of the wisdom of God and to the doctrine of the word, and insists day and night in the meditation of the divine law: he is the eye of this great body. Another occupies himself with the service of the brothers and of the needy: he is the hand of this holy body. Another listens avidly to the word of God: he is the ear. Another again is dedicated completely to visiting the sick and to consoling the afflicted, he goes to help the one who finds himself in difficulty in order to free him: he, in the body of the Church, can be called without doubt the foot. And thus each one, being more expert in his own ministry, carries it out in the most efficient way.

**Responsorial.** 1 Cor. 12: 11, 28; Wis. 7: 16

**R:** All these are the work of one and the same Spirit. \* And in the Church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing.

**V:** We and all our words, all intelligence and all our abilities are in his power.

**R:** And in the Church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** 2 Cor. 5:1-21

*The love of Christ pushes us.*

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

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men; but God knows what we are, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to be proud of us, so that you may be able to answer those who pride themselves on a man's position and not on his heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God was making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 5: 18; Rm. 8: 32*

**R:** God has reconciled us to himself through Christ, \* and he gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

**V:** He did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for all of us:

**R:** and he gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

**Second Reading.** *Ps. 48: 14 – 16*

*Christ is redemption and salvation for everyone*

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

“It was God who reconciled the world to himself in Christ” (2 Cor. 5: 19), in that Christ Jesus, of whom only it was said “The Word became flesh and came to dwell amongst us” (Jn. 1: 14). He did not dwell amongst us therefore as a brother, but as the Lord. Therefore, when Christ reconciled the world to God, he himself certainly did not need reconciliation. For what sin of his own was he to make propitiation, when he knew no sin? When the

Jews were asking for the drachma, which according to the law was given for sin, he said to Peter: “Simon, from whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?” Peter answered: “From others”. Jesus said to him: “Then the sons are free. However, not to give offence to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself” (Mt. 17: 25-27).

He is pointing out that he is not obliged to propitiation for sins on his own behalf, because he is not a slave of sin, but the Son of God, free from all fault. For the Son sets free; it is the slave who is guilty. So he was free from all sin, and gives no price of redemption for his own soul: the price of his blood was more than sufficient to redeem all the sins of the world. Justly then he sets others free, owing nothing for himself.

Furthermore: not only does Christ owe no price of redemption for himself or propitiation for sin, but if you take the case of any man, it can be understood that no individuals owe propitiation for themselves, since Christ is the propitiation of all, and himself the redemption of all.

What man’s blood has now the power to redeem him, when Christ shed his own blood for the redemption of all? Is there anyone’s blood comparable to the blood of Christ? Or what man is so mighty that he can offer propitiation for himself surpassing that which Christ offered in himself, Christ who alone reconciled the world with God through his own blood? What greater victim is there, what superior sacrifice, what better advocate than he who was made the atonement for the sins of all, and gave his life as the redemption for us?

The individual propitiation or redemption, therefore, is not to seek, because the price of all is the blood of Christ, by which the Lord Jesus redeemed us, who alone reconciled the Father. He laboured to the end, since he took upon himself our labours, as he says, “Come to me, all you who labour, and I will refresh you” (Mt. 11: 28).

**Responsorial.** *Col. 1: 21-22; Rom. 3: 25*

**R:** You were estranged from God, you were his enemies in heart and mind, and your deeds were evil. But now by Christ’s death in his earthly body, God has reconciled you to himself, \* in order to bring you, holy, pure and faultless into his presence.

**V:** God offered him so that by his death he should become the means by which men's sins are forgiven, through their faith in him,  
**R:** in order to bring you, holy, pure and faultless into his presence.

**Gospel. Mk. 10: 1-12**

*Man must not separate what God has joined.*

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

And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again; and again, as his custom was, he taught them.

And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to put her away." But Jesus said to them, "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

## **SATURDAY**

### **CYCLE 1**

**First Reading. 1 Cor. 14:1-19**

*The gift of tongues.*

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

Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, he who prophesies speaks to men for their up building and encouragement and consolation.

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless some one interprets, so that the church may be edified. Now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how shall I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will any one know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?

So with yourselves; if you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will any one know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning; but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.

So with yourselves; since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. Therefore, he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how can any one in the position of an outsider say the "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? For you may give thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all; nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

**Responsorial.** 1 Cor. 14: 12; 8: 2

**R:** So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, \* try to excel in gifts that build up the Church.

**V:** Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up;

**R:** try to excel in gifts that build up the Church.

**Second Reading.** *Ps. 1:9 – 12*

*I will sing with the Spirit,  
But I will also sing with the intelligence.*

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

What is more pleasing than the psalm? David himself expressed it so beautifully, when he said: “Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing psalms to our God! How pleasant to praise him!” (Ps. 146: 1). And this is indeed true: for in the psalms there is an opportunity for the people to bless and praise God; the psalms express the admiration that people feel and what the people want to say; in them the Church speaks, the faith is professed in a melodious way and authority finds a ready acceptance; there too is heard the joyful call of freedom, the cry of pleasure and the sound of happiness. The psalm soothes anger, frees from care and drives away sadness. It is a weapon by night and a teacher by day; it is a shield in times of fear, an occasion of rejoicing for the holy, a mirror of tranquillity: it is a pledge of peace and harmony, for with the aid of the harp the psalm makes one melody from a number of different notes. The beginning of the day hears the sound of the psalm and the end of the day hears its echoes.

In the psalm teaching is combined with charm; for it is sung for pleasure but learnt for instruction. Is there anything that does not come to mind as you read the psalms? It is there that I read: “A Song for my Beloved” (Ps. 44: 1), and at once I am on fire with a desire for divine love. There too I see the secret of revelations, the evidence of the resurrection, the gifts that have been promised. In the psalms I learn to avoid sin and I forget the shame of sins now repented.

What, then, is the psalm if it is not the musical instrument of virtues, which the holy prophet played with the help of the Holy Spirit, making the earth resound with the delightful melody of heavenly music? Just as this harmonious music is played on the strings and chords of the harp, which are fashioned from the remains of dead animals, and is made into a song of the heavenly tune of divine praise, so the psalmist has taught that we should first die to sin and then that the various works of virtue should appear in this body. In this way our devotion should be sure to find favour with the Lord.



For this reason David taught that we should sing and praise the Lord in our hearts, just as Paul also sang: "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also" (1 Cor. 14: 15). The psalms teach us to shape our lives and our actions by the study of higher things, so that material pleasures may not arouse our bodily passions, by which the soul is weighed down instead of being redeemed. And the holy prophet said that he sang psalms for the redemption of his soul: "I will sing praises to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to you; my soul also which you have rescued" (Ps. 70: 22-23).

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 91: 2-4*

**R:** It is good to give thanks to the Lord, \* to make music to your name, O Most High.

**V:** It is good to give thanks to you on the ten-stringed lyre and the lute, with the murmuring sound of the harp,

**R:** to make music to your name, O Most High.

CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *2 Cor. 6:1- 7:1*

*Tribulations of Paul and exhortation to sanctification.*

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

Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

We put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labours, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as

dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide. We do not restrict you, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return -- I speak as to children -- widen your hearts also.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Be'lial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

**Responsorial.** *2 Cor. 6: 14, 16; 1 Cor. 3: 16*

**R:** For what partnership have justice and iniquity? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? \* We in fact are the temple of the living God.

**V:** Don't you know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

**R:** We in fact are the temple of the living God.

**Second Reading.** *Hom. 13:1,2*

*Our heart is open for you.*

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

"We have opened wide our hearts to you" (2 Cor. 6: 11).

Just as what brings heat makes things expand, so it is the gift of love to stretch hearts wide open; it is a warm and glowing virtue. Love caused Paul to open his mouth and expand his heart. "I do not love only by words", he says, "my heart itself joins in the song of love and so I speak with confidence with my whole mouth and my whole heart".

Nothing was wider than the heart of Paul which embraced all the saints, just like the individual lover, in close bonds of love. And yet his love did not stretch to breaking point, not become weak, but remained whole in every case. What wonder that he had such feeling for the saints when even in the case of unbelievers his heart embraced the whole world?

And so he did not say, “I love you”, but- and this is more emphatic, - “we have spoken frankly to you, we have opened wide our hearts”. We have all men in our hearts; and not merely that alone, but with ample room. For he who is loved wanders in the inmost heart of the lover without any fear: accordingly Paul says: “On our part there is no constraint; any constraint there may be is in yourselves”. Notice that the reproach is uttered with restraint, which is the mark of lovers. He did not say, “You people do not love me”, but, “Not in an equal measure”, nor does he wish them to be too bitterly reproached.

It is evident in all his writings how he burns with love for the faithful. Choose quotations out of every epistle. Writing to the Romans, the apostle says: “I love to see you”, and “I have often made it my object to come to you”, and “If in any way at all I may have a prosperous journey to you” (Rm. 1. 11, 13, 10). To the Galatians he speaks as follows: “My little children, with whom I am again in travail” (Gal. 4: 19); to the Ephesians again: “For this reason I kneel in prayer on your behalf” (Ep. 3: 14); to the Thessalonians: “What is our hope or joy or crown of boasting? Is it not you?” (1 Thes. 2: 19). For he said that he carried them around both in his heart and in his chains.

Furthermore, he writes to the Colossians: “I wish you to see how great a conflict I have on your behalf and on behalf of those who have not seen my face in the flesh so that your hearts can have comfort” (Col. 2: 1, 2), and to the Thessalonians: “Like a nurse who cherishes her charges, thus we yearn for you, and we wanted to give you not only the gospel but even our lives” (1 Thes. 2: 7, 8). “On our part there is no constraint”, he says. He does not say only that he loves them, but that they love him, that in this way too he may draw them to him. And about them he bears this witness: “Titus has come bringing us your longing, your tears, and your eagerness” (2 Cor. 7: 6, 7).

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 13: 4, 6; Prov. 10: 12*

**R:** Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one. Love is never conceited.

\* Love does not gloat over other men's sins, but delights in the truth.

**V:** Hatred provokes quarrels, but love overlooks all transgressions.

**R:** Love does not gloat over other men's sins, but delights in the truth.

**Gospel.** *Mk. 10:13-16*

*He who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a child  
will not enter into it.*

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

And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.