

WEEK 5

SUNDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading *1 Cor. 1:1 – 17*

Preamble – Division among the Corinthians

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sos'thenes, To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him with all speech and all knowledge -- even as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you --so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chlo'e's people that there is quarrelling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apol'los," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I am thankful that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Ga'ius; lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name.

I did baptize also the household of Steph'anas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any one else. For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the

word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Responsorial *Cfr. 1 Cor. 1: 7, 8, 9*

R: We await the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ: * he will confirm us to the end.

V: Faithful is God, by whom we have been called to the communion of his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord!

R: He will confirm us to the end.

Second Reading *Hom. 43*

Think, man, of what type of gift with which you have been enriched today

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

“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made” (1 Cor. 16: 2). When Paul says the first day of the week, he intends Sunday. And why does he assign this day to the offering? Why not Monday, Tuesday, or Saturday itself? It is not by chance, nor without reason, but because he wanted to seize the most opportune moment in order to alight in us in a greater way the desire to give.

It is not of little importance to choose the opportune moment for every thing. Why, then you will say to me, did he choose this day in order to urge the faithful to give to the one who is in need?

Because in that day we abstain from work, and the rest gives a greater relaxation to the spirit; but especially because it is the day in which we have received the greatest benefits. On this day death has been overcome, the curse has been annulled, sin has been cancelled, the doors of hell have been broken, the devil has been overcome: after a long time of enmity, men have been reconciled with God, the human race has been restored to its ancient dignity, or better, brought back to a much higher dignity. On this day the sun saw that stupendous spectacle: man made immortal. Paul wanting us to remember so many and such benefits, involved this day, almost as a witness, in order to be able to say to each one: think, man, how many and what benefits you have received today, from how many and what evils you have been freed, what you were and what you have become.

If we are used to celebrate the day in which we have been born, and if many servants commemorate solemnly the day in which freedom was granted to them, he with banquets, he with great donations, how much more should we sanctify this day which it is not exaggerated to call the birthday of the whole human race!

We were lost and we have been saved: it is right therefore to solemnize it spiritually, not with lunches, wine and drunkenness, but by giving a part of our material goods to the poorer brothers. I tell you this not so that you may only approve, but so that you may do it. Do not think that these words are addressed only to the Corinthians, but they have value for each one of us and for all those who will come. Let us truly do what Paul has commanded us to do: every Sunday let each one of us put aside in his house that which he has managed to save and let this become a norm and an unchangeable habit, in a way that there may be no more need for invitation or of exhortation: that which counts is not so much the words or the exhortations, but a habit that has taken roots.

Responsorial *Hos. 10: 12; Heb. 12: 12-13*

R: Sow for yourselves according to justice and you will harvest according to goodness; * it is time to search for the Lord, so that he may come and diffuse his justice over you.

V: Strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees, and make level paths for your feet:

R: it is time to search for the Lord, so that he may come and diffuse his justice over you.

CYCLE 2

First Reading *Gen. 39: 1 – 23*

Joseph in Egypt

Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Pot'i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ish'maelites who had brought him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian, and his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the

LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. So Joseph found favour in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.

From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had, in house and field. So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and having him he had no concern for anything but the food that he ate. Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking.

And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Lo, having me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand; he is not greater in this house than I am; nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie with her or to be with her.

But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house. And when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice; and when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled and got out of the house."

Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me; but as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled out of the house." When his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled.

And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in

prison. But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison; and whatever was done there, he was the doer of it; the keeper of the prison paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

Responsorial *Cfr. Ps. 80: 6; 104: 18-19, 22*

R: Joseph, when he entered into the land of Egypt, heard a language that he had never heard; he served with his hands like a slave, * and he taught wisdom to the elders.

V: They clasped his legs with chains, iron pressed hard against his neck, until his prediction was realized.

R: And he taught wisdom to the elders.

Second Reading *Nm. 59*

The prayer of the faithful

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

If anyone will not obey that which the Lord himself has said through us, let him know that he will run into a fault and into a danger that is truly serious. We however will be innocent of this sin; and with prayers and unceasing supplications we will ask the Creator of the universe to keep intact the number of his elect in the entire world, for love of his Son Jesus Christ, through whom he has called us from darkness to light, from ignorance to the knowledge of the glory of his name. He has called us to hope in your name, which is the vital beginning of every creature; he has opened the eyes of our heart in order to know you, who only are “the Excellent and Most High, who has his eternal throne and whose name is holy” (Is. 57: 15); who annuls the designs of the nations (cfr. Ps. 32: 10), “you place the humble on high and render vain the thoughts of the crafty” (Jb. 5: 11, 12); you who make poor and enrich (cfr. 1 Sam. 2: 7; Lk. 1: 53), who give death and make live (cfr. Deut. 32: 39), only benefactor “of the spirits and of every living being” (Nm. 16: 22), who “penetrate the abyss

with a look” (Dan. 3: 55), you see the works of men and you help them in danger; “protector of the disheartened” (Jdt. 9: 11), creator and guardian of every soul; you who multiply the nations of the earth and from among them all you choose those who love you through Jesus Christ your beloved Son through whom you have instructed, sanctified and honoured us. We beg you, Lord, to be our “refuge and shield” (Ps. 118: 114). Free those of us who are tormented, have pity on the humble, raise the fallen, help the poor, heal the sick, lead back to you the wanderers of your people, satisfy the hungry, free the prisoners, sustain the weak, comfort the cowardly; let all the people “know that you are the Lord, the only God” (2 Kgs. 19: 19) and Jesus Christ your Son; and “we your people and the flock that you pasture” (Ps. 78: 13).

Responsorial *Cfr. Ps. 9: 5, 10, 35*

R: O God, you who sit enthroned as just judge, in the time of anguish be a secure refuge for the oppressed, * Since only you see the anguish and the pain: you see everything and take everything into your hands.

V: The poor abandons himself to you, you are the support of the orphan,

R: since only you see the anguish and the pain: you see everything and take everything into your hands.

YEAR A

Gospel *Mt. 5: 13 – 16*

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Third Reading *Hom. 2*

The lamp does not shine for itself, but for those who are in the darkness

A reading from the “Homilies on some passages of the New Testament” of St. John Chrysostom, bishop

How much displeasure I rightly feel when I remember that in the festive days the assemblies were similar to the vast extensions of the sea and that instead now not even a minimum part of that multitude is seen gathered here! Where in this moment are those who in the solemnity are cause of so much sadness for us? I feel the absence and I afflict myself because of them at the thought that many of them who were on the way of salvation go into perdition. What a great loss of brothers we must suffer, how meagre does the number of those who attain salvation become; so that the most considerable part of the Church assumes the aspect of a dead and motionless body.

And what do we have to do with this? Someone will say.

It concerns us a lot instead, because you have not taken care of them, you do not exhort them, you do not help them with your advice, you do not manage to draw them and almost to force them to come, and you do not recall them because of great negligence. Christ in fact, when he called us salt and leaven and light, wanted to demonstrate that we must not be useful only to ourselves, but to many others.

Those elements in reality serve and are advantageous to others: the lamp does not shine for itself, but for those who are in the darkness; and you are a lamp not in order to enjoy the light by yourself, but in order to lead back the one who is lost. Of what use is a lamp when it does not give light to the one who is in darkness? And of what use is it to be Christian if you do not convert anyone to virtue?

In the same way, salt does not purify only itself, but arrests the corruption of the bodies and does not permit them to dissolve and to perish. So also you: from the moment that God has made you spiritual salt, gather and reunite the corrupted members, that is the negligent brothers, as also those who toil continuously in mechanical works, in a way that, freed from the sloth of the spirit as from a cancerous wound, they may enter and be a part of the body of the Church. For this he has defined you as leaven: though small, it does

not ferment itself but the entire mass, no matter how vast and immense it is.

So also you, though few in numbers, are many and powerful because of the faith and love towards the cult of God.

As in fact the leaven is not motionless because of its smallness, but because of the heat innate in its nature and through the strength of its property it has the superiority over the mass, so also you, if you want, can lead back a number that is much greater to the same fervour and to the same love.

Responsorial *Prv. 4: 18; 1 Cor. 13: 8*

R: The path of the just is like the light of daybreak; * it gains in splendour until midday.

V: Love will never end,

R: it gains in splendour until midday

YEAR B

Gospel *Mk. 1: 29- 39*

And immediately he left the synagogue, and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever, and immediately they told him of her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her; and she served them.

That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered together about the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him pursued him, and they found him and said to him, "Every one is searching for you." And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also; for that is why I came

out." And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Third Reading *Disc. 18*

God searches for men, not for human things

A reading from the "Discourses" of St. Peter Chrysologus, bishop

He who will listen attentively will learn from the gospel of today for what reason the Lord of heaven, the restorer of the universe, has entered into the poor earthly dwelling of his servants. But there is no reason to marvel that he who with so much goodness had come to help everyone, had drawn near to everyone in an affable way.

Consider what had attracted Christ to the house of Peter: certainly not the desire to rest, but the sickness of the patient; not the necessity to eat, but the opportunity of saving; to put to service his divine power, not to allow himself to be served luxuriously by men. In the house of Peter they were not pouring out wine, but tears. For this Christ entered there: not to banquet, but to give back life. God searches for men, not for the human things; he desires to give the heavenly goods, not receive the earthly ones; Christ comes to rehabilitate us, not to ask for our things.

"Jesus entering into the house of Peter saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with fever" (Mt. 8: 14). Christ having entered into the house of Peter, occupies himself immediately with that for which he had come: he does not consider the aspect of the house, not the crowd that came to meet him, not the honour of all those who greeted him, and not even did he pay attention to the relations; he certainly did not interest himself with the decorum of the preparations, but he looked only to the groans of the sick person, to the scorching heat of the feverish. He saw her serious, way beyond all human hope, and immediately he extended his hand to the divine action: almost before he had time to bend himself towards her suffering humanity, she was already rising from the bed towards his divinity. "He touched her hand and the fever disappeared" (Mt. 8: 15). See how the fever abandons the one whom Jesus takes by the hand: the sickness does not resist in front of the author of health; there where he who gives life has entered there is no access for death.

"That evening at sundown, they brought all those who were possessed by demons and he cast out the evil spirits with his word" (Mt. 8: 16). At

sundown when the earthly day concludes, when the world moves away from the light of the ages. He who gives back the light comes in the evening, in order to give back the day without sunset to us pagans who walk in the night of the ages. In the evening, that is in the last times, **the devout and solemn sacrifice of the apostles offers us pagans to God**, and the demons that subjected us through the cult of the idols are cast out of us. In fact **ignoring the unique God, we served numberless gods with sacrilegious and despicable slavery**.

To us the Christ does not come according to the flesh, he comes with the word: but if the faith depends on listening and listening from the word (cfr. Rm. 10: 17), he has freed us from the slavery of the demons, while these from wicked tyrants have become prisoners. From this moment the demons that enslaved us have fallen into our hand, subjected to our command: now brothers, **do not let our unfaithfulness take us back to being their slaves**. Let us recommend ourselves and our actions to the Lord, let us entrust ourselves to the Father, let us believe in God: since the life of man is in the hands of God, who as a Father, guides the actions of the children, and in as much as he is Lord he does not abandon the care of his family.

Responsorial *Is. 61: 1, 2; Jn. 8: 42*

R: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has consecrated me with the anointing, he has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, * to bind up the wounds of the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom to the slaves, to promulgate the year of mercy of the Lord.

V: For I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own: but he has sent me.

R: To bind up the wounds of the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom to the slaves, to promulgate the year of mercy of the Lord.

YEAR C

Gospel *Lk. 5: 1 – 11*

While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennes'aret. And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting

into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Third Reading *Disc. 43: 5*

Christ chooses fishermen as apostles

A reading from the "Discourses" of St. Augustine, bishop

The blessed Apostle Peter, while he was on the mountain with the Lord and with the other two disciples of Christ, James and John, heard a voice that came from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him" (Mk. 17: 5).

The apostle remembers it in his letter and gives witness to it saying: "We heard this voice descending from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain". Then he adds: "Thus we have a confirmation which is better than that of the prophets" (2 Pet. 1: 18-19).

This Peter, who speaks like this, was a fisherman: and now he deserves great praise as a preacher, nor can the fisherman be recognized in him anymore. Therefore the apostle Paul, addressing himself to the first Christians, said: "Consider your vocation, brothers: not many among you were wise men according to the flesh, not many were influential, not many were of noble birth. But God has chosen that which in the world is foolishness in order to

confound the wise. God has chosen that which in the world is weak in order to confound the strong, God has chosen that which in the world is despicable and despised and that which is nothing in order to reduce to nothing the things that are, so that no man may boast in front of God” (1 Cor. 1: 26-29).

If Christ in fact had chosen an orator in order to begin his work, this one would have said: I have been chosen for my eloquence.

If he had chosen a senator, this one could have said: I have been chosen for my dignity. If he had chosen an emperor, this one could have said: I have been chosen for my power.

They keep quiet and are made to wait for these people, they calm themselves a little. Not that they have to be abandoned or despised; but all those who can boast about themselves are kept a little aside.

Give me, he says, that fisherman; give me that ignorant man, give me that unprepared man; give me that man with whom the senator does not even deign to speak with when he buys the fish: give him to me. When I will have transformed him, it will be clear that I am the one who acts. Though, I act in the senator and in the orator and in the emperor also; but though I act in the senator, all the more certainly will I do so in the fisherman.

The senator can boast of himself, so also the orator or the emperor; the fisherman cannot boast of anything else other than the Christ. Come, come first the fisherman, to teach the humility that saves; after him the emperor also can pass better.

Remember therefore the holy, just, good fisherman, full of Christ, who had the mission of taking into his nets thrown in the whole world together with the other peoples, also these.

Remember that he has said: “We have a confirmation that is better than the words of the prophets” (2 Pet. 1: 19).

Responsorial *1 Cor. 1: 27-29; Is. 33: 18*

R: God has chosen that which in the world is weak in order to confound the strong: * God has chosen that which is despicable and despised and that which is nothing, in order to reduce to nothing the things that are, so that no man can boast in front of God.

V: Where is he who counted? Where is he who weighed out? Where is he who counted the precious stones?

R: God has chosen that which is despicable and despised and that which is nothing, in order to reduce to nothing the things that are, so that no man can boast in front of God.

MONDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading *1 Cor. 1: 18 – 31*

The foolishness of the cross

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; therefore, as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord."

Responsorial *1 Cor. 2: 2, 5; 1: 30*

R: For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified, * so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power.

V: It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, that is our righteousness, holiness and redemption,

R: so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power.

Second Reading *Treatise 9*

The wisdom of the cross of the Lord

A reading from the treatise “On the evangelical beatitudes” of Baldwin of Canterbury, bishop

For God the wisdom of this world is foolishness; but also for the world the wisdom of God is foolishness. To speak of the cross is foolishness for the world. Even to speak of poverty and of suffering is, in a certain sense, to speak of the cross. To be poor, unhappy – it is said – is a cross. But the children of God, the children of the light understand the wisdom of God. The children of this world however, in their kind, are shrewder than the children of the light. Exactly for this the children of the ages and the children of the light consider one another foolish and insane. Those in fact are all turned towards vanity and to the false illusions: these love like the light the foolishness of the preaching, through which God has established the salvation of those who believe.

Foolishness for the man animal, who cannot understand. This opposition between the wisdom of God and that of the world shakes the foundations of the faith itself in the hearts of many, and is so strong as to constitute a danger for the elect as well.

“Blessed are the afflicted for they will be consoled” (Mt. 5: 4). The vanity and the truth make us distinguish, however, grief from grief.

There are those who cry for things that are not worth crying for: we should rather cry for them, exactly because as they uselessly cry, so they place their faith in vain things. There are others who cry for a just reason; the Lord himself speaking to the disciples said: “Truly, truly I say to you: you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy” (Jn. 16: 20).

And the psalmist: “While going, they go crying, carrying the seed for the sowing, but coming back they come back with joy, carrying the sheaves” (Ps. 125: 6).

By these holy tears, like a rain of grace that descends from heaven, our fields are irrigated, because, after abundant rains, the harvest rises. This is the spontaneous rain that God has reserved for his inheritance. In this valley

of tears in which we are born, abundant is the source of tears: it is rare that all that happens, inside and outside of us does not offer us a reason for tears. But **the weak complain about their afflictions; the perfect instead rejoice also in the midst of tribulations**, which is a sign of strength; and **yet grieve because of their weakness. You must not believe that he who is perfect does not have weaknesses: the virtue, in fact, is made perfect in infirmity** (cfr. 2 Cor. 12: 9).

Responsorial *1 Cor. 3: 18-19; Gal. 6: 14*

R: If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a fool so that he may become wise; * for the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight.

V: As for me, may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,

R: for the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight.

CYCLE 2

First Reading *Gen. 41:1 – 17a, 25 – 43*

The dreams of Pharaoh

After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows sleek and fat, and they fed in the reed grass. And behold, seven other cows, gaunt and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. And the gaunt and thin cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. And Pharaoh awoke.

And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream.

So in the morning his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men; and Pharaoh told them his dream, but there was none who could interpret it to Pharaoh.

Then the chief butler said to Pharaoh, "I remember my faults today. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own meaning. A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard; and when we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. And as he interpreted to us, so it came to pass; I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged."

Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it; and I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favourable answer." Then Pharaoh narrated his dreams to Joseph. Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dream of Pharaoh is one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one. The seven lean and gaunt cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. It is as I told Pharaoh, God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land, and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of that famine which will follow, for it will be very grievous. And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

Now therefore let Pharaoh select a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and take the fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and lay up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them

keep it. That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine which are to befall the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine."

This proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a man as this, in whom is the Spirit of God?"

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are; you shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in his second chariot; and they cried before him, "Bow the knee!" Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.

Responsorial *Cfr. Wis. 10: 13, 14*

R: Wisdom did not abandon the just man in chains, but it preserved him from sin, until it procured for him a royal sceptre * and power over his adversaries.

V: It unmasked his accusers like beggars and gave him an eternal glory

R: and power over his adversaries.

Second Reading *Nm. 60 – 61*

Purify us, Lord, in your truth

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

You, Lord, have manifested in works the everlasting constitution of the world; you, Lord, have created the earth, showing yourself faithful in all ages, just in judgements, admirable in strength and in magnificence, wise in creating and prudent in sustaining the created things, good in the things that are seen, faithful towards those who trust in you, “merciful and kind” (Joel. 2: 13) forgive us the wickedness and the injustices, the falls and the faults.

Do not judge us, your servants and maid servants, for every sin, but purify us in your truth (cfr. Jn: 17: 17), “make our steps steady

according to your word" (Ps. 118: 133) so that "we may walk with uprightness of heart" (1 Kgs. 9: 4), justice and simplicity " and that we may do that which is good and right" (Deut. 12: 28) in your presence and in the presence of our leaders. Yes, Lord, "Let your face shine upon us" (Ps. 66: 2) " to make us overabundant in goods" (Deut. 30: 9) in peace, so that we may be protected "with the Powerful hand" (Deut. 4: 34) and we may be freed from every sin "by your outstretched arm" (Deut 4: 34) and free us from those who hate us unjustly. Give harmony and peace to us and to all the inhabitants of the earth, as you gave to our fathers, who invoked you piously "in faith and in truth" (1 Tm. 2: 7), since we obey to your most holy and almighty name and to our leaders and rulers on earth.

You, Lord, have given them royal power by means of your magnificent and indescribable strength, so that knowing the glory and honour that you attribute to them, we submit ourselves to them without resisting to your will. Give them, Lord, health, peace, harmony, firmness in order to administer without any error the sovereign power that you have given to them. You in fact, Lord, heavenly king of the ages, give to the sons of men glory, honour and power over all that is earthly; Lord, guide their minds according to that which is "good and upright in your eyes" (Deut. 12: 28), so that, administering with peace and sweetness that power that you have given them, they may have your favour. To you, who only can operate these benefits with us, and also more, we give thanks through the Pontiff and patron of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and majesty to you, now and for generations and generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Responsorial *Cfr. Ps. 142: 2; Jn. 17: 17; 14: 27; 1 Cor. 14: 33*

R: Do not call your servants to judgement, O Lord, * consecrate us in the truth, and give us your peace.

V: You are not the God of dissent and discord, but of peace.

R: consecrate us in the truth, and give us your peace.

Gospel *Mk. 6: 53 – 56*

All those who touched Jesus were cured

And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennes'aret, and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized him, and ran about the whole neighbourhood and began to bring sick people on their pallets to any place where they heard he was. And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or country, they laid the sick in the market places, and besought him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched it were made well.

TUESDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading 1 Cor. 2:1 – 16

The Spirit scrutinizes the depths of God

When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For **I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.**

And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him," God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit. The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

"For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Responsorial *Dan. 2: 22, 28; 1 Cor. 2: 9, 10*

R: God reveals things that are profound and hidden, and he knows that which is concealed in darkness. * There is a God in the heavens who reveals the mysteries.

V: Those things that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor ever entered into the heart of man, God has revealed them to us through the Spirit.

R: There is a God in the heavens who reveals the mysteries.

Second Reading *Hom. 7: 1- 2*

We speak of God's mysterious wisdom

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

“We speak of God's mysterious wisdom” (1 Cor. 2: 7). The mystery does not admit demonstration, but announces that which is. It would not be a divine mystery anymore if you were to add something of your own to it.

For the rest it is called mystery exactly because we believe not what we see, but one thing is what we see and another that in which we believe. Such is the nature of the mysteries of our faith.

I who believe have a different reaction in front of the mystery than the one who does not believe. I listen that Christ has been crucified and remain full of wonder in front of his love for men; he who does not believe listens and says that it is foolishness. I listen that he made himself a servant, and I admire his wisdom; that other one listens and considers it a degradation. I hear that he died, and I am amazed in front of his power that has not been overcome by death, but on the contrary has destroyed death; that other one hears it, and judges it a madness.

When the one who does not believe hears about the resurrection, he considers it a fairy tale, I instead, convinced by the evidence of the proof that we possess, adore the economy of God. When that one hears of the regenerating bath being spoken of, he thinks only of water; I do not see only that which appears, but also the purification of the soul by means of the Spirit. He thinks that I have washed only the body; I instead believe that the soul also has become pure and holy, and I think of the sepulchre, of the

resurrection, of the sanctification, of the justice, of the redemption, of the adoption, of the inheritance, of the kingdom of heaven, of the Spirit that has been given to me. I do not consider in fact that which appears to the eyes of the body, but that which it represents for the eyes of the soul. I hear the body of Christ nominated: I understand in one sense, he who does not believe in another.

It is as when children see a book, but not knowing the value of the letters do not understand that which they see. This happens with regard to the mystery: the unbelievers hear, but as though not hearing; instead the believers who have received from the Spirit the capacity of understanding, penetrate into the hidden significance. This is what Paul meant when he said: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing" (2 Cor. 4: 3).

Mystery therefore is precisely that which, even though preached everywhere, is not understood by those who do not have an upright soul; it is revealed not by human wisdom but by the Holy Spirit, in the measure in which it is granted to us to understand it. Therefore it is not wrong to call this mystery arcane: in fact, not even to us believers is the full perception and the complete knowledge given. For this, Paul said: "Our knowledge is imperfect, and imperfect is our prophecy" (1 Cor. 13: 9). "Now we see as in a mirror, in a confused way; but then we will see face to face" (1 Cor. 13: 12).

"We speak of a divine wisdom, mysterious, which has remained hidden and which God has pre-ordained before the ages for our glory" (1 Cor. 2: 7).

Responsorial *1 Cor. 1: 21, 23*

R: For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, * God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believed.

V: We preach Christ crucified, scandal for the Jews, foolishness for the pagans.

R: God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believed.

First Reading *Gen. 41: 56 – 42: 26*

The brothers of Joseph go to Egypt

So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live, and not die." So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might befall him. Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

Now Joseph was governor over the land; he it was who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came, and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. Joseph saw his brothers, and knew them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food." Thus Joseph knew his brothers, but they did not know him. And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them; and he said to them, "You are spies, you have come to see the weakness of the land." They said to him, "No, my lord, but to buy food have your servants come. We are all sons of one man, we are honest men, your servants are not spies." He said to them, "No, it is the weakness of the land that you have come to see." And they said, "We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more."

But Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you, you are spies. By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain in prison, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you; or else, by

the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies." And he put them all together in prison for three days.

On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined in your prison, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, and bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so. Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us and we would not listen; therefore is this distress come upon us." And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the lad? But you would not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood." They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them.

Then he turned away from them and wept; and he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to replace every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them. Then they loaded their asses with their grain, and departed.

Responsorial *Gen. 42: 21, 22*

R: In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us and we would not listen. * Therefore this distress has come upon us.

V: Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the lad? But you would not listen.

R: Therefore this distress has come upon us.

Second Reading *Nm. 62 – 63*

Maintain the harmony in charity and peace

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

We have written enough, brothers, on that which regards our religion, and it is most useful to the one who wants to live a virtuous life practising piety and justice. We have mentioned every argument: the faith, penance,

sincere charity, continence, chastity, patience. We have reminded you that it is necessary to be pleasing to the Almighty God living in justice, in truth and generosity; maintaining the harmony through the forgiveness of offences, charity, peace, a constant equity, as our fathers of whom we have spoken to you acted, with a spirit of humility towards God, the Father and creator, and towards all men.

And these warnings we have addressed to you all the more voluntarily because we knew that we were writing to exemplary faithful who have studied in depth the divine science. It is therefore right that following such great and numerous examples, we should submit and obey those who are the guides of our souls, so that, pacified after the vain quarrels, we can arrive fully to the goal which is proposed to us by the faith.

You will cause us joy and happiness if, docile to all that we write to you moved by the Holy Spirit, you break with all resentment and jealousy, putting into practise this our exhortation to peace and harmony. We have also sent you faithful and wise men, who have lived in the midst of us from their youth up to old age, giving constant testimony of integrity. They will be witnesses between you and us. This we have done so that you may know that our every preoccupation has had this scope: that soon you may reach peace.

Responsorial *Gal. 6: 2; 5: 13*

R: Carry each other's burdens, * and in this way you will fulfil the laws of Christ.

V: Serve one another in love,

R: and in this way you will fulfil the laws of Christ.

Gospel *Mk. 7: 1 – 13*

You cancel the word of God with the traditions of men

Now when the Pharisees gathered together to him, with some of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands defiled, that is, unwashed. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands, observing the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they purify themselves; and there are many other traditions that they

observe, the washing of cups and pots and vessels of bronze. And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with hands defiled?"

And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men." And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition! For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die'; but you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God) -- then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God through your tradition which you hand on. And many such things you do."

WEDNESDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading *1 Cor. 3:1 – 23*

Work of the ministers in the Church

But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ.

I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men?

For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apol'los," are you not merely men? What then is Apol'los? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apol'los watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are equal, and each shall receive his wages according to his labour.

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw --each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

If the work, which any man has built on, the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apol'los or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Responsorial *Ep. 2: 19-20; 1 Cor. 3: 16*

R: You are saints and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, * with Christ himself as the chief cornerstone.

V: You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you,

R: with Christ himself as the chief cornerstone

Second Reading *Hom. 8: 4*

Let us adhere to Christ: if we separate ourselves from Him we are lost

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

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3: 11). Do you see how Paul proves his assertions making use of common examples? He intends to say this: I have announced Christ, I have given you the foundation, take care now how you build on it, that it may not be in view of a vain glory or in favour of men who take away his disciples from him. Let us not fall into heresy: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ".

Let us build therefore on him and let us adhere to him as to a foundation, as the shoots adhere to the vine, and let nothing come between us and Christ; if something comes between us, we are immediately lost. The shoot draws sap only if it is attached to the vine; and a building stands, only if it is compact: if instead it is coming apart it collapses, not having anything on which to base itself. Let us adhere to Christ, not only, but let us consolidate ourselves in him, because, for the little that we detach ourselves

from him, we are lost: "Behold, those who go away from you will perish" (Ps. 72: 27).

Let us consolidate ourselves in him through works: If anyone observes my words, he says, he remains in me" (cfr. Jn. 14: 23). He makes use of many images in order to exhort us to remain united. See: he is the head, we the body; can there be any separation between the head and the body?

He is the foundation, we the building; he is the vine, we the branches; he is the bridegroom, we the bride; he is the shepherd, we the sheep; he is the way, we run along it. We, again, are the temple, he dwells in us; he is the first-born, we the brothers; he is the heir, we are the co-heirs; he is the life, we the living; he is the resurrection and we will rise; he is the light and we are flooded with it. All these images give the idea of a close connection and do not admit any void, not even the minimum distance between us and him: he who detaches himself from him, even though in a little way, drifts and goes always further away from him.

If a member of the body is subjected even to a small amputation, he dies; and a building, even for a small collapse, can fall into ruin; so also a trunk, for the little that it is cut off from the roots, becomes useless. That therefore which seems a small thing, is anything but small, in fact it is everything. When therefore we commit a slight sin or we are lazy, let us not pass over it because of the fact that it is something light: **if neglected, it immediately becomes serious**. So, also a garment, if it begins to tear and we do not take care, will tear more; and a roof, only if some tiles break, if it is not covered, sends the whole house in ruin. Taught by these examples, let us **never despise the small things, in order not to slip into those that are more serious** and which finish in our separating ourselves from the head. If we are not careful, it is difficult later to climb back up from the bottom, not only because of the distance, but also for the difficulty of the climb from the abyss into which we have fallen. **Sin is a profound chasm** and has **such a power of attraction** that it **keeps us attached to the bottom**. As he who falls into a well cannot come out of it easily, but needs to be helped by the one who can pull him out of it, so also the one who falls into the depths of sin.

Let us throw down towards them the cord and let us pull them up; in fact, truly it is not only the others who have need, but we ourselves, who must tie ourselves together and climb back up: and

not only in the measure in which we have descended, but even more on high, if we want. God gives us his help: "He does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he desists from his conduct and lives" (Ez. 18: 23).

Responsorial *Ps. 117: 22; 1 Cor. 3: 10, 11*

R: The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone. * Each one be careful how he constructs.

V: For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has already been laid, which is Jesus Christ.

R: Each one be careful how he constructs.

CYCLE 2

First Reading *Gen. 43: 1 – 11a, 13 – 17, 26 – 34*

New journey of the brothers of Joseph in Egypt

Now the famine was severe in the land. And when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go again, buy us a little food."

But Judah said to him, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.' If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food; but if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.'"

Israel said, "Why did you treat me so ill as to tell the man that you had another brother?" They replied, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' What we told him was in answer to these questions; could we in any way know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

And Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you,

then let me bear the blame for ever; for if we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice."

Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man a present, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds.

Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man; may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, that he may send back your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

So the men took the present, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin; and they arose and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon." The man did as Joseph bade him, and brought the men to Joseph's house.

When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present that they had with them, and bowed down to him to the ground. And he inquired about their welfare, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" They said, "Your servant our father is well, he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!" Then Joseph made haste, for his heart yearned for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out; and controlling himself he said, "Let food be served."

They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked at one another in amazement. Portions were taken to them from Joseph's

table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Responsorial *Cfr. Gen. 43: 12, 14, 11*

R: Take gifts with you and go to that powerful man, and when you have found him, prostrate yourselves and adore him. * May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, so that he may send back your brother Benjamin, and your other brother whom he holds prisoner.

V: Take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags and carry them down to that man as a gift.

R: May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, so that he may send back your brother Benjamin, and your other brother whom he holds prisoner.

Second Reading *Nm. 64 – 65*

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you
And with all those who have been called.*

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

May God who sees everything, Lord of the spirits and of all flesh, who elected the Lord Jesus Christ and us through him to be his people, give to every soul who will have invoked his holy and glorious name, faith, fear, peace, patience, forbearance, continence, chastity and purity in order to be pleasing to his name, through Jesus Christ our high priest and protector, through whom be glory and majesty, power and honour to him forever and ever. Amen.

Send back to us immediately with joy and peace the delegates that we send to you: Claudio Efebo, Valerio Bitone and also Fortunato, so that they can announce to us as soon as possible that the peace and harmony so much desired has been re-established among you, in a way that we also can rejoice as soon as possible for your good order.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all those who everywhere are called by God through him and through him be glory, honour, power, majesty, and eternal kingdom to God forever and ever. Amen.

Responsorial *Phil. 2: 2, 3, 4; 1 Thes. 5: 14, 15*

R: Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. * Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

V: Sustain the weak, be patient with everyone, always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

R: Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Gospel *Mk. 7: 14 – 23*

That which comes out of man is what contaminates him.

And he called the people to him again, and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him".

And when he had entered the house, and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, "Then, are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on?" (Thus he declared all foods clean). And he said, "What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man".

THURSDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading *1 Cor. 4: 1 – 21*

Exhortation against pride.

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

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then every man will receive his commendation from God.

I have applied all this to Apol'los and myself for your benefit, brethren, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favour of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

Already you are filled! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labour, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off scouring of all things.

I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel I urge you, then, be imitators of me. Therefore I sent to you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Responsorial *1 Cor. 11: 1; 4: 15*

R: Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ; * For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel

V: You may have ten thousand guardians in Christ, but certainly not many fathers;

R: For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel

Second Reading

In everything show yourselves ministers of God.

A reading from the treatise “On the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist”, of Baldwin of Canterbury, bishop.

You, priests of the Lord, who like torches illuminate the whole world, honour your ministry. Follow justice, “embrace the good doctrine” (Ps. 2: 12 Vulg.); “in fact you have been bought at a dear price, glorify therefore God in your body” (1 Cor. 6: 20), “carrying always and everywhere the death of Jesus” (2 Cor. 4: 10). In all things show yourselves to be ministers of God, carrying the stigmata of Jesus in your body and the character of his troops, in abstinence and continence, in chastity and soberness, in patience and humility and in every purity and holiness, so that all those who see you may recognize you as belonging to God, and that the words of the prophecy may be fulfilled in you: “You will be called priests of the Lord, you will be said to be ministers of our God” (Is. 61: 6).

Bless the Lord, priests of the Lord, bless him who has blessed you with every blessing from heaven, he who has blessed the house of Aaron. May

God be sanctified in you; may in you appear that which is truly: holy, pure, uncontaminated. May his name not be blasphemed because of you, may our ministry not be dishonoured because of you. Let your conduct, though in the midst of corrupt and perverse people, be such that those who see you can say: These are truly priests of the Lord, they are truly disciples of Jesus Christ and successors of the apostles; they are truly the descendants whom the Lord has blessed. Pay attention to the dignity of the priesthood that has been entrusted to you to fulfil and administer. **Let your hands, to which is given to offer such a great sacrifice, be pure of all corruption**, so that you may not be involved with those “in whose hands is **perfidy** and whose right hand is full of gifts” (Ps. 25: 10) **Keep your lips pure** so that they may taste how sweet the Lord is: let the actions of grace, words of praise, prayers, supplications, invocations be on the mouth of the priest.

Dearest brothers, let us be steady and let us believe firmly in that which the authority of God himself and that of the holy fathers teaches us to believe about the holy Communion. In this sacrament is enclosed the grace and the price of our redemption; the truth is hidden so that our faith may be strengthened; the way of living of Christ is presented again to us as an example for our life. Whence, the Lord when he instituted this sacrament and handed it over to men said: **“Do this in memory of me”** (Lk. 22: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 24-25). You **do what I do, offer that which I offer; live as I teach you. Draw the norm of living and of dying from the example that I leave you.** This sacrament produces this effect in us: Christ lives in us and we in him. See to it that, as Christ has died for us, so also we must die for Christ. To those who die in Christ or for Christ, other than a holy death, an immense grace is prepared. The glory of that resurrection, of which this sacrament well received is a pledge and salutary restoration, is promised and destined to them. Through it God **“will transfigure our miserable body in order to conform it to his glorious body”** (Phil. 3: 21). What shall we render to the Lord in exchange for such a great grace?

Responsorial *1 Cor. 4: 1-2; Lk. 12: 42*

R: So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. * Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

V: Who then is the faithful and wise administrator, who the master puts in charge of his servants?

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

CYCLE 2

First Reading *Gen. 44: 1- 20, 30 – 34*

Joseph and Benjamin

Then he commanded the steward of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack, and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph told him.

As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their asses. When they had gone but a short distance from the city, Joseph said to his steward, "Up, follow after the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you stolen my silver cup? Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he divines? You have done wrong in so doing.'" When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words.

They said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants that they should do such a thing! Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan; how then should we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whomever of your servants it be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."

He said, "Let it be as you say: he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be blameless." Then every man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and every man opened his sack. And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and every man loaded his ass, and they returned to the city. When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he

was still there; and they fell before him to the ground. Joseph said to them, "What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed divine?" And Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found."

But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father."

Then Judah went up to him and said, "O my lord, let your servant, I pray you, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant; for you are like Pharaoh himself. My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father, or a brother?' And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children; and his father loves him.'

Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the lad's life, when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die; and your servants will bring down the grey hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol.

For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame in the sight of my father all my life.' Now therefore, let your servant, I pray you, remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord; and let the lad go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father if the lad is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would come upon my father."

Responsorial *Cfr. Gen. 43: 29, 30*

R: Is this your younger brother of whom you had spoken to me? God grant you grace, my son! * He went out in a hurry because he felt the need to cry: He entered into his room and cried.

V: Raising up his eyes, Joseph saw Benjamin and he was moved in his heart by the presence of his brother.

R: He went out in a hurry because he felt the need to cry. He entered into his room and cried.

Second Reading *Hom. 28*

The soul that is not the dwelling place of God is unhappy

A reading from the “Homily” attributed to St. Macarius, bishop

As once God was angry with the Jews and gave Jerusalem over for a spectacle to its enemies, and as those who hated them ruled over them and there was no longer there any feast or sacrifice, so, being angry with the soul for its transgression of his command, God handed it over to its enemies, who seduced it and utterly deformed it.

Just as a house which has no master dwelling in it is dark, neglected and despised, and is filled with dirt and filth, so a soul which does not have its Lord feasting in it with his angels is filled with the darkness of sin, the shame of passions and every sort of disgrace.

Alas for the street in which no one walks, in which the voice of man is not heard; it is a lurking place for wild beasts. Alas for the soul in which the Lord does not walk and put to flight by his voice the spiritual beasts of wickedness. Alas for the house in which its master does not dwell. Alas for the land which has no farmer to till it. Alas for the ship which has been abandoned by its steersman: it is tossed about by the winds and waves of the ocean, and perishes. Alas for the soul which does not have its true steersman Christ in it: it lives in the bitter darkness of the sea and is tossed by the waves of passions. It is buffeted by the wicked spirits as by winter tempests, and finally comes to destruction.

Alas for the soul which is without Christ to cultivate it so that it will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. When it is deserted it becomes full of thorns and thistles and finally, its harvest is not one of fruit but of destruction by fire. **Alas for the soul that has not Christ for its Lord dwelling in it, for when it is deserted and filled with the stench of passions it becomes a den of vice.**

When a farmer sets out to till the ground he has to take proper tools and clothing for work in the fields: so when Christ, the heavenly king and the true husbandman, came to humanity laid waste by sin, he clothed

himself in a body and carried the cross as his implement and cultivated the deserted soul. He pulled up the thorns and thistles of evil spirits and tore up the weeds of sin. With fire he burnt up all the harvest of its sins. When thus he had tilled the ground of the soul with the wooden plough of his cross, he planted it in a lovely garden of the Spirit; a garden which brings forth for God as its master the sweetest and most delightful fruits of every sort.

Responsorial *Jn. 15: 1, 5, 9*

R: I am the true vine, you are the branches; * he who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

V: As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love;

R: he who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

Gospel *Mk. 7: 24 – 30*

The dogs under the table eat the crumbs of the children.

And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house, and would not have any one know it; yet he could not be hid. But immediately a woman, whose little daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophoeni'cian by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And he said to her, "Let the children first be fed, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." And he said to her, "For this saying you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." And she went home, and found the child lying in bed, and the demon gone.

FRIDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading *1 Cor. 5: 1 – 13*

Judgement against immorality

It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

For though absent in body I am present in spirit, and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral men; not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But rather I wrote to you not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber -- not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."

Responsorial *1 Cor. 5: 7, 8; Rm. 4: 25*

R: Cleanse out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump: for Christ, our Passover has been immolated! * Let us celebrate therefore the feast of the Lord,

V: he who has been put to death for our sins and has been raised for our justification.

R: Let us celebrate therefore the feast of the Lord.

Second Reading *Ch. 23*

The progress of the dogma in the Christian religion

A reading from the “First notebook” of St. Vincent of Lerino, presbyter

Is there to be no development of doctrine in Christ’s Church? Certainly there should be great development.

Who could be so grudging towards his fellow men and so hostile to God as to try to prevent it? But care should be taken to ensure that it really is development of the faith and not alteration. Development implies that each point of doctrine is expanded within itself, while alteration suggests that a thing has been changed from what it was into something different.

It is desirable then that development should take place, and that there should be a great and vigorous growth in the understanding, knowledge and wisdom of every individual as well as of all the people, on the part of each member as well as of the whole Church, gradually over the generations and ages. But it must be growth within the limits of its own nature, which is to say within the framework of the same dogma and of the same meaning.

Let religion, which is of the spirit, imitate the processes of the body. For, although bodies develop over the years and their individual parts evolve, they do not change into something different. It is true that there is a great gap between the prime of youth and the maturity of later years, but the people who reach these later years are the same people who once were adolescents. So, although the size and outward appearance of any individual may change, it is still the same person, and the nature remains the same.

The limbs of infants are tiny, while those of young men are large, but they are the same limbs. The man has no more parts to his body than the little child: and if there are parts that appear with age and greater maturity they are already present earlier in the embryo. As a result, it can be said that nothing new is produced in old men that

was not already present in an undeveloped form when they were boys.

There is no doubt, then, that this is the correct and legitimate rule for development and the best and most striking order of growth, if the passage of years sees those parts evolve in the adult, which the Creator in his wisdom had prepared in him beforehand when he was a child.

But if the human form is changed into some shape that is not of its own kind, or at least if something is added or taken away from the full complement of its members, then the whole body must perish or become a monster or at least be weakened in some way. It is fitting, then, that Christian doctrine too should follow these laws of development, so that with the passage of years it may be strengthened, with time it may make progress and with age it may achieve greater profundity.

Long ago our ancestors sowed the seeds of the faith in the field of the Church. It would be quite incongruous and wrong if their descendants were to reap the weeds of error in place of the harvest of truth.

Rather is it right and fitting that there should be no discrepancy between the final result and the beginning. From the seed that was planted, that is the teaching of the gospel, we should reap a harvest of wheat, which is the doctrine that has developed. So then, when something evolves from those first beginnings, as from seeds, it should now be received with joy and cultivated with care.

Responsorial *Deut. 4: 1, 2; Jn. 6: 63*

R: Listen, O Israel, and take note of the laws and customs that I am teaching you. * You must add nothing to what I command you, and take nothing away from it.

V: The words I have spoken to you are spirit, and they are life.

R: You must add nothing to what I command you, and take nothing away from it.

First Reading *Gen. 45: 1 – 15, 21 – 28; 46: 1 – 7*

Reconciliation of Joseph with his brothers

Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him; and he cried, "Make every one go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.

And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are yet five years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.

So it was not you who sent me here, but God; and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Make haste and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry; you shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have; and there I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come; lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty'.

And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my splendour in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Make haste and bring my father down here." Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

The sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. To each and all of them he gave festal garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five festal

garments. To his father he sent as follows: ten asses loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. Then he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way."

So they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. And they told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." And his heart fainted, for he did not believe them.

But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived; and Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive; I will go and see him before I die."

So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here am I." Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

Then Jacob set out from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They also took their cattle and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters; all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.

Responsorial *Cfr. Gen. 45: 3, 4, 5, 2*

R: Joseph said to his brothers: * Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves, because God has sent me here before you to conserve you in life.

V: He wept aloud so that all the Egyptians and all the house of Pharaoh heard him, and he said to his brothers:

R: Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves, because God has sent me here before you to conserve you in life.

Second Reading C. 10

Abraham, example of exceptional faith

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

“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations” (Rm. 4: 18). What does he want to say by “hoping against all hope”? Against all human hope. However in the hope in God, who overcomes everything, who can do everything, in whom all hope is. And he believed: not only that he would have become a father, but a father of many nations, he, who was old and already dried up, with a wife who was sterile and advanced in years.

“Just as it had been said to him: “So shall your offspring be. Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead – since he was about a hundred years old – and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised” (Rm. 4: 18-21).

This is truly to glorify God: to entrust oneself to his providence, and to his ineffable power, without trying to scrutinize or investigate, and without saying: Why this? For what reason? How will it happen? For us this is incomprehensible. Neither is Abraham worthy of admiration only because of this: but also because after such a promise he was commanded to sacrifice that only-begotten son of his whom he loved so much and yet he was not scandalized.

Together with all the other considerations, the promise and the preceding assurance, which now clashed with the command received above all could have furnished him with a reason to be scandalized. He had been promised: so shall your offspring be, like the stars of heaven (cfr. Gen. 15: 5; 22: 17); and now he was commanded to get rid of, killing cruelly, his only-begotten son whose offspring was to fill the world.

But not even now was that just man scandalized or disturbed. He did not react as a fool or as one who was to reason humanly would have reacted. For this Moses admired him and said: “After

these things, God put Abraham to the test and said to him: Take your son, your only-begotten son whom you love, Isaac, and offer him in holocaust on a mountain that I will indicate to you" (Gen. 22: 1, 2). And the promise? And the assurance that he would have been the father of nations, and that his offspring would have been more numerous than the stars of heaven?

Observe how after these words, though having heard that he had to kill his son, he accepted to immolate the one from whom such a great multitude of nations was to have been born, to immolate him I say, that is to get rid of him and to offer him in holocaust to God. With reason Paul, praising and extolling him exactly for this, sets him as an example and says: "Through faith Abraham, **put to the test**, offered Isaac"; in order to underline the greatness of his gesture and the example of faith which he has furnished us, he adds: "and exactly he who had received the promises offered his only-begotten son" (Heb. 11: 17).

Responsorial *Jam. 2: 23*

R: Abraham had faith in God and this was credited to him as justice, * and he was called the friend of God.

V: He was just in front of God, and walked in his ways,

R: and he was called the friend of God.

Gospel *Mk. 7: 31 – 37*

He makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decap'olis. And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech; and they besought him to lay his hand upon him. And taking him aside from the multitude privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, "Eph'phatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. And he charged them to tell no one; but the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."

SATURDAY

CYCLE 1

First Reading *1 Cor. 6: 1 – 11*

Fights in front of pagan judges

When one of you has a grievance against a brother, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, matters pertaining to this life!

If then you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who are least esteemed by the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no man among you wise enough to decide between members of the brotherhood, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?

To have lawsuits at all with one another is defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that even your own brethren.

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Responsorial *Tit. 3: 5, 6; 1 Cor. 6: 11*

R: God has saved us by means of a washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit * poured out on us abundantly by him through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

V: We have been washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God,

R: poured out on us abundantly by him through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Second Reading Ps. 43: 37 – 39

The seed of all is Christ

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

There are some who are called to become sheep for the slaughter. Among these is our Lord Jesus Christ, who made himself a lamb in order to give himself to us as food. How did this come about? Listen: “Christ, our Passover, has been immolated” (1 Cor. 5: 7). Think that our fathers also ate the lamb after having butchered it as a figure of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every day we nourish ourselves in the sacrament. Through the same Lamb therefore they also became “sheep for the slaughter” (Ps. 43: 12).

However not only must the saints not fear this holy banquet, but on the contrary they must desire it. For the rest it is not possible to reach the kingdom of heaven in any other way. The Lord himself has said: If you do not eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have eternal life (cfr. Jn. 6: 53). It is proved therefore that our Lord is food, he is a meal, he is food for those who eat him. He himself says: “I am the living bread that has come down from heaven” (Jn. 6: 51).

And so that you may be convinced that all this has been done for us and for this he came amongst us, St. Paul says: “All participate in that unique bread” (1 Cor. 10: 17).

We do not fear, therefore, to be made sheep for the slaughter. The Lord has also redeemed us with his flesh and with his blood, and Peter sustained many tribulations for the Church. Even the apostle Paul and the other apostles sustained many: they were beaten with whips, stoned, closed in prison. On that patience in suffering and on that courage with which such and so frequent dangers were faced, was founded the people of God and the Church grew; in fact, seeing that though in the midst of such suffering the strength of the apostles did not fail at all, but on the contrary, through this brief life, they gained immortal life, pushed the others also towards martyrdom.

The verse that follows in which they say: “You have dispersed us in the midst of the nations” (Ps. 43: 12), is proof. The apostles, in fact, were sent to the pagans and dispersed among the nations, as

once the holy prophets, so that from such a dispersion most abundant fruit could be derived. Our Lord Jesus Christ, like a grain of wheat, fell to the ground and died in order to produce abundant fruit: in the same way also the holy apostles were scattered in order to carry the good seed among the nations, so that their example could germinate also among them. We find in the Scriptures that the Lord says: "I have constituted you so that you may go and bear fruit and that your fruit may remain" (Jn. 15: 16). The Lord Jesus Christ therefore became seed, exactly as it had been said to Abraham: "And to your seed" (Gen. 13: 15 Vulg.) who is Christ. Christ therefore is the seed of everyone. And he wants to fall and to be spread in order to transfigure the misery of our body to the image of his body.

He, seed of salvation, shoot for all men, and the holy apostles transfigured by him in his image, were sent as seed and dispersed everywhere, so that the nations, gathered in the field of the Church, could shine forth in a rich harvest of fruit in the whole world. They were dispersed in order to bear new fruit and, as new harvest, to be introduced into the granary of the Church.

Responsorial *Col. 1: 24, 25*

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

V: For this I struggle and fight, with the strength that comes from Christ who acts in me with power,

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

CYCLE 2

First Reading *Gen. 49: 1 – 29, 33*

Jacob blesses his sons

Then Jacob called his sons, and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in days to come.

Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob, and hearken to Israel your father. Reuben, you are my first-born, my might, and the first fruits of my strength, pre-eminent in pride and pre-eminent in power. Unstable as water, you shall not have pre-eminence because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it -- you went up to my couch! Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords. O my soul, come not into their council; O my spirit, be not joined to their company; for in their anger they slay men, and in their wantonness they hamstring oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel. Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as a lioness; who dares rouse him up?

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Binding his foal to the vine and his ass's colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes; his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

Zeb'ulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea; he shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon. Is'sachar is a strong ass, crouching between the sheepfolds; he saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant; so he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a slave at forced labour. Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path, which bites the horse's heels so that his rider falls backward. I wait for your salvation, O LORD. Raiders shall raid Gad, but he shall raid at their heels. Asher's food shall be rich, and he shall yield royal dainties. Naph'tali is a hind let loose, which bears comely fawns. Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall.

The archers fiercely attacked him, shot at him, and harassed him sorely; yet his bow remained unmoved, his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel), by the God of your father who will

help you, by God Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that couches beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of the eternal mountains, the bounties of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, and on the brow of him who was separate from his brothers.

Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey, and at even dividing the spoil."

All these are the twelve tribes of Israel; and this is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him.

Then he charged them, and said to them, "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed, and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

Responsorial *Ap. 5: 5; Gen. 49: 10*

R: See, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has triumphed; * he will open the book and its seven seals.

V: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, until he comes to whom it belongs;

R: he will open the book and its seven seals.

Second Reading *Hom. 10:4*

*That which for Christ was the cross and the tomb
has been for us baptism*

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

"How could we who are already dead to sin still live in sin?" (Rm. 6: 2). What does it mean to be dead to sin? To not give in to it in any way. The baptism has worked this only one time: it has rendered us dead to sin. Now we, with our commitment, must render this action of baptism continuously acting in a way that whatever thing sin commands us, not only should we not linger to listen to it, but we must remain insensible, like dead men.

In another passage Paul says that sin is dead, but there he wants to demonstrate that the virtue by now is easy; here instead wanting to shake the reader, he transfers on man the image of death. And since these words were difficult, he passes to explain them with a more vehement tone: “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death” (Rm. 6: 3-4). What does he mean when he says: “We have been baptised in his death?” That we must die also as he died: the cross, in fact, is a baptism.

That which the cross and the burial was for Christ, baptism has been for us, even if in the order of the same things: Christ in fact died and was buried in the flesh, we instead to sin. For this he does not say: “We have been completely united to him in death”, but “with a death similar to his” (Rm. 6: 5). It refers to death in both cases, but the subject is different: that of Christ is death of the flesh, ours instead is death of sin. As that is true, this also is true. But though being true, it is necessary for us to cooperate on our part; for this he adds: “So that, just as Christ was resurrected from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we too may live a new life” (Rm. 6: 4). Here he conditions the resurrection to the commitment of a holy life. How?

Do you believe, he says, that Christ died and has risen from the dead? Then believe that this will happen in you also: it is the same thing. In fact for you also awaits the cross and the burial. If you have been a participant with him in the cross and in the burial, much more will you be in the resurrection and in the life: having removed that which was more serious, that is sin, there is no reason to doubt that which is simpler, that is of the victory over death.

But this, Paul for the moment leaves for the consideration of the conscience of those who listen to him: he instead, after having put us in front of the future resurrection, demands from us another resurrection, a new imposition of the present life which would be the consequence of a conversion of the habits. When in fact he who is dissolute becomes chaste, he who is avaricious generous, he who is violent meek, there comes about a resurrection which is a figure of that future one. And of which resurrection are we speaking? Sin being dead, justice rises; destroyed the life of before, this new angelic life rises.

Responsorial *Rm. 6: 11-12; Col. 2: 12*

R: Consider yourselves dead to sin, but living for God, in Christ Jesus. *
Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies so that you obey its evil desires.

V: You have been buried in fact together with him in baptism.

R: Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies so that you obey its evil desires.

Gospel *Mk. 8: 1 – 10*

They will eat and they will be satisfied.

In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him, and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come a long way." And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these men with bread here in the desert?" And he asked them, "How many loaves have you?" They said, "Seven." And he commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. And they had a few small fish; and having blessed them, he commanded that these also should be set before them. And they ate, and were satisfied; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people.

And he sent them away; and immediately he got into the boat with his disciples, and went to the district of Dalmanu'tha.