

**WEEK 34**

**SUNDAY**  
**OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**  
**KING OF THE UNIVERSE.**  
**SOLEMNITY**

CYCLES 1 and 2

**First Reading.** *Dn. 7: 1 – 27*

*The vision of the Son of Man who receives the kingdom.*

**A reading from the prophet Daniel.**

In the first year of Belshaz'zar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, and told the sum of the matter.

Daniel said, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand upon two feet like a man; and the mind of a man was given to it.

And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side; it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.'

After this I looked, and lo, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back; and the beast had four heads; and dominion was given to it.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrible and dreadful and exceedingly strong; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

As I looked, thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat; his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him; a thousand thousands served

him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.

As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

"As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious and the visions of my head alarmed me. I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me, and made known to me the interpretation of the things. 'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, for ever and ever.' "Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrible, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze; and which devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet; and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up and before which three of them fell, the horn which had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and which seemed greater than its fellows.

As I looked, this horn made war with the saints, and prevailed over them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints received the kingdom.

"Thus he said: 'As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces.

As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to

change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, two times, and half a time. But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end.

And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.'

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Mk. 13: 26-27; Ps. 97: 9*

**R:** They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds with great power and glory. He will send his angels. \* He will gather together the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the end of heaven.

**V:** He will judge the world with justice and the nations with rectitude.

**R:** He will gather together the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the end of heaven.

Or

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. 1 Chr. 29: 11, 12; 2 Macc. 1: 24*

**R:** Yours, Lord, is the power, yours is the kingdom, \* you dominate over all the nations; grant peace, Lord, in our days.

**V:** Creator of everything, God tremendous and powerful, just and merciful.

**R:** you dominate over all the nations, grant peace, Lord, in our days

Or

**First Reading.** *Ap. 1: 4 – 6, 10, 12 – 18; 2: 26 – 28; 3: 5, 12, 20 – 21*

*Vision of the Son of Man in His power.*

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

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet. Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lamp-stands, and in the midst of the lamp-stands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast; his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters; in his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. He who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received power from my Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life; I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Mk. 13: 26-27; Ps. 97: 9*

**R:** They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds with great power and glory. He will send his angels. \* He will gather together the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the end of heaven.

**V:** He will judge the world with justice and the nations with rectitude.

**R:** He will gather the elect together from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the end of heaven.

**Second Reading. C. 25**

*Your kingdom come.*

**A reading from the treatise “On prayer” of Origen, presbyter.**

According to the saying of our Lord and Saviour, the kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen. No one will say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ because the kingdom of God is within us. (Lk. 17: 21). The word is very near us; it is on our lips and in our heart (Rm. 10: 8). It is clear from this that when a man prays that God’s kingdom may come, he is praying, as he should, for the kingdom of God which is within him, that it may rise, flourish and reach its full growth. Every saint is subject to God’s reign and obeys the spiritual laws of God who dwells in him as in a well-governed city. The Father is present within him and Christ reigns with the Father in the soul which has become perfect, as he said: ‘We will come to him and make our home with him’ (Jn. 14: 25).

For those of us who press forward unceasingly, the kingdom of God which is within us will reach its full completion when the apostle’s words are fulfilled, that Christ, with all his enemies subject to him, will deliver the kingdom to God the Father so that God may be all in all (cfr. 1 Cor. 15: 24, 28). And so, praying unremittingly in the spirit which the Word inspires in us, let us say to our Father who is in heaven: ‘Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come’ (Mt. 6: 9-10).

We must understand this about the kingdom of God – as there is no partnership between righteousness and iniquity, no fellowship of light with darkness, no accord of Christ with Belial (cfr. 2 Cor. 6: 14-15), so the kingdom of sin cannot co-exist with the kingdom of God.

If we would have God reign over us, then, sin must have no reign in our mortal body. We must put to death what is earthly in us and bear the fruits of the Spirit, so that God may walk in us as in a spiritual garden and reign alone in us with his Christ, so that Christ may be seated within us at the right hand of that spiritual power for which we pray, seated until all his

enemies within us are made a footstool for his feet (cfr. Ps. 109: 1) and all the principalities and authorities and powers are destroyed in us.

This can happen in each one of us. The last enemy also, death, can be destroyed, so that Christ can say in us too ‘O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ (1 Cor. 15: 26, 55; cfr Hos. 13: 14). Now therefore, let what is perishable in us clothe itself in holiness and imperishability, let what is mortal put on the Father’s immortality when death has been destroyed, (cfr. 1 Cor. 15: 54) so that God may reign over us and we may live even now amid the blessings of rebirth and resurrection.

**Responsorial.** *Ap. 11: 15; Ps. 21: 28- 29*

**R:** The dominion of the world has passed to the Lord of us all, and to Christ, his anointed; \* he shall reign forever and ever.

**V:** All races will worship the Lord to whom all sovereignty belongs;

**R:** he shall reign forever and ever.

Or

**Second Reading.** *Book 2*

*Christ has humiliated Himself thus entering first into the kingdom of the Father, in order to open for us the way to the royal glory.*

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

“Now, Father, it is time for you to glorify me with that glory I had with you before ever the world was” (Jn. 17: 5). Do you see how these words do not ask for the beginning of the glorification, but the renewal of that glory which he possessed in precedence and that he says it speaking as man? The one who loves God will be able to find and to understand everywhere in the Scriptures how everything has been given to the Son because of the incarnation; he will find the confirmation above all in that terrible vision of Daniel, in which the prophet said that he had seen one of great age seated on a throne and “a thousand thousand waited on him”. And he added: “And I saw coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man. He came to the one of great age and was led into his presence. On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship, and men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants” (Dan. 7: 10, 13-14).

Do you see how the entire mystery of the incarnation is accurately outlined here? Contemplate how the Son has received the kingdom from the Father. It is not the plain prayer of the prophet, but the appearing of “one like a son of man”. As it is also written: “appearing in human form, he humbled himself” (Phil. 2: 7-8), in this way entering first into the kingdom of the Father, in order to show himself to us as the beginning and the road of a royal glory. And having assumed a life completely according to our human nature, he lowered himself unto the death of his body for us in order to free us from death and from corruption, given that the likeness that he had assumed with us, for having in a certain way united his nature to ours, making us participants of eternal life: so also, even though as God he is the Lord of glory, yet he took on himself our shame, in order to lead the human nature to the glory of the kingdom.

He has “the primacy in everything” says St. Paul (Col. 1: 18): he is the way, the door, the first fruits of every good, who leads us from death to life, from corruption to incorruptibility, from weakness to strength, from slavery to adoption as sons of God, from a condition of shame and of disgrace to the glory and the honour of the kingdom.

**Responsorial.** *Dan. 7: 13-14*

**R:** I gazed into the visions of the night. And I saw coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man. He came to the one of great age who gave to him sovereignty, glory and kingship. \* And men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants.

**V:** His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty that shall never pass away, nor will his empire ever be destroyed.

**R:** And men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants.

YEAR A

**Gospel.** *Mt. 25: 31 – 46*

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

"When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but



the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you to drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.'

Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

### **Third Reading. Book 9**

*When Christ will appear, then we also will appear with him in glory.*

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

After his resurrection from the dead Jesus, having already brought back our nature to its original condition and having freed man from corruption, ascended as first fruits to God the Father who is in the heavens, he who is his first temple. But after a brief time he will descend again and he will return once more in the midst of us in the glory of his Father with the holy angels, in order to convoke everyone, good and wicked, to the tremendous tribunal. Every creature in fact must appear in judgement and the Lord will give to each one according to the merit of life; to those on his left, that is to all those who have enjoyed wrongly of the things of the world, he will say: "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared

for the devil and his angels” /Mt. 25: 41); to those instead who will be on his right, that is to the saints and to the good, he will say: “Come, blessed of my Father, receive in inheritance the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world” (Mt. 25: 34). They will dwell and reign with Christ, enjoying with immense joy the heavenly goods; having become conformed to him in the resurrection and freed from the snares of the ancient corruption, they will live in eternity an indescribable and lasting life together with the ever living Lord.

The fact that he who will have led a good and virtuous life will live unceasingly with Christ, contemplating his indescribable divine beauty, is affirmed by Paul when he says: “At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven. Those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord forever” (1 Thes. 4: 16-17).

And addressing himself to those who have made efforts to mortify the worldly passions he will exclaim: “You in fact are dead, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed – and he is your life – you too will be revealed in all your glory with him” (Col. 3: 3-4).

In order to summarise in brief the essence and the significance of this passage, we will say this: those who love the wickedness of the world, will fall into hell and they will remain far away from the face of Christ; those instead who love virtue and who will have kept uprightly the seal of the Holy Spirit, will dwell and live together with him contemplating his divine beauty: “The Lord will be for you an eternal light, your God will be your splendour” (Is. 60: 19).

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 9: 8-9; Mt. 25: 31-32*

**R:** See, Yahweh is enthroned forever, he sets up his throne for judgement;  
\* he is going to judge the world with justice and pronounce a true verdict on the nations.

**V:** He will sit on the throne of his glory. And all the nations will be gathered together in front of him.

**R:** He is going to judge the world with justice and pronounce a true verdict on the nations.

YEAR B

**Gospel.** *Jn. 18: 33 – 37*

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

Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world." Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice."

**Third Reading.** *Tratt. 115, 2 – 5*

*The kingdom of Christ until the end of the world.*

**A reading from the “Treatise on the Gospel of John” of St. Augustine, bishop**

“My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn. 18: 36). The kingdom of Christ has already commenced on this earth and will last till the end of the world; the harvest in fact will coincide with the end of the world, when the harvesters will come, that is the angels, and they will remove all scandals from his kingdom, which they would not have done if his kingdom was not already here. However it is not of this world, because in the world it is like a pilgrim; it is to this his kingdom in fact that he refers “You are not of the world, but I have chosen you from the world” (Jn. 15: 19).

They were therefore of the world when they did not belong to his kingdom, but to the prince of the world. All men in fact belong to the world, created yes by the true God, but generated by a defective race and condemned in Adam; but that which has been regenerated in Christ forms a kingdom which is not of this world. Thus God “has freed us from the power of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col. 1: 13). Of this kingdom he said: “My kingdom is not of this world” or:

“My kingdom is not of this kind” (Jn. 18: 36). “Then Pilate said to him: So you are a king then? Jesus answered: It is you who say it. Yes, I am a king”. Then he added: “I was born for this, I came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth” (Jn. 18: 37).

It is clear therefore that here he wanted to refer to his birth in time, when he came to the world assuming a human body, and not to his nature without beginning by which he was God, through whom the Father created the world.

He says therefore that he was born for this purpose and for this reason he came into the world, so that being born from a Virgin he could bear witness to the truth.

But since faith does not belong to everyone, he adds: “All who are on the side of truth listen to my voice” (Jn. 18: 37). He listens with interior ears, that is he listens to my voice, which in a word means: he believes in me. When Christ bears witness to the truth, he bears witness to himself: his in fact is the affirmation: “I am the truth” (Jn. 5: 31). When he then said: “All who are on the side of the truth listen to my voice” (Jn. 18: 37), he was alluding to the grace with which he calls the predestined. “Pilate said to him: What is the truth?”. But he did not stop to listen to the answer. “And having said this he went out again to the Jews and said to them: I find no fault in him” (Jn. 18: 38).

I believe that when Pilate said: “What is the truth?” the custom of the Jews to free one during the Passover immediately came into his mind; therefore he did not wait for Jesus to answer what the truth is, in order not to place any delay, having remembered well the custom during the Passover through which Jesus could be freed; and that he desired this much was evident.

Yet he could not remove from his mind that Jesus was the king of the Jews, as if this truth of which he had asked explanations, and as he wrote on the cross was imprinted inside.

**Responsorial.** *1 Pet. 1: 21; Dan. 7: 14*

**R:** God has resurrected Christ from the dead and has given him glory; \* and so your faith and your hope is fixed in God,

**V:** who gave him power, glory and the kingdom.

**R:** And so your faith and your hope are fixed in God.

YEAR C

**Gospel.** *Lk. 23: 35 – 43*

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

And the people stood by, watching; but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!"

The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

**Third Reading.** *Hom. 1: 3 – 4*

*The cross is the symbol of the kingdom.*

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

"Jesus, remember me when you enter into your kingdom" (Lk. 23: 42). He did not have the courage to say this before he had put aside through confession the burden of his sins. Do you see how powerful confession is? He confessed and Paradise was opened to him. He confessed, and he had such faith that, though being a criminal, he dared to ask for the kingdom. Do you see what benefits the cross gets for us? You ask for the kingdom and what do you perceive? You have in front of you the nails and the cross. But it is exactly the cross that is the symbol of the kingdom. Therefore I invoke the King himself, because I see him crucified; the King in fact must die for his subjects. He himself said: "The good shepherd offers his life for his sheep" (Jn. 10: 11); therefore the good king also gives his life for his subjects; and exactly because he gives his life I invoke him: "Remember me in your kingdom". Do you see therefore that the cross is the symbol of the

kingdom? Do you want to have other confirmations? He did not leave him on the earth; he lifted him up and took him with him into heaven. From what does this appear? Because he will be with him in his glorious Second Coming, so that you may understand how much the cross is worthy of honour and why it is also called his glory.

But let us see in what way he will come with the cross. It is good in fact to display it with clarity. “If they say to you: Look, he is in the desert, do not go there; or: He is in the house, do not believe” (Mt. 24: 26). He spoke in this way of his Second Coming in glory, so that no one would be seduced and become a prey of false christs or of the Antichrist. Since in fact the Antichrist will come before the Christ, I give you the sign of the coming of the shepherd, so that, searching for the shepherd, some one will not run into the wolf.

He has left you a sign, so that you may not think that if his first coming remained hidden, so also will be his second. The first took place secretly because he came to search for that which was lost; but the second will not be like this. And how will it be? “The coming of the Son of man will be like lightening striking in the east and flashing far into the west” (Mt. 24: 27). All of us will see him and no one will have to ask if he is here or there. As when the lightning strikes, no one needs to ask if it has appeared or not, so also at the coming of the Christ we will not need to ask if he has come.

But, as we had promised, we will answer the question about whether he will come with the cross. Listen therefore. He said: “Then”. But when? When the Son of man will come “the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness”(Mt. 24: 29). The intensity of the light then will be so great, as to darken the brightest stars. “Then the stars will fall from heaven. Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in the heavens (Mt. 24: 30). Do you see therefore the power of the sign of the cross? And like the unexpected arrival of a king in the city is preceded by the soldiers carrying his insignia in order to announce his arrival, so also when the Lord will descend from heaven, the hosts of angels and archangels will precede him carrying that glorious standard and in this way they will announce to us his royal entry.

**Responsorial.** *Is. 49: 22, 26; Jn. 8: 28*

**R:** Thus speaks the Lord, I will beckon to the nations and hoist my standard for the peoples. \* Then all mankind shall know that I the Lord am your

saviour and that your redeemer is the Mighty one of Jacob.

**V:** When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I Am.

**R:** Then all mankind shall know that I the Lord am your saviour and that your redeemer is the Mighty one of Jacob

# MONDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ez. 36: 16 – 36*

*Future renewal of the people of God:*

*The new heart and the new spirit.*

**A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.**

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their doings; their conduct before me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood which they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries; in accordance with their conduct and their deeds I judged them.

But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that men said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.' But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel caused to be profaned among the nations to which they came. "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations will know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.

You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses; and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay



no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.

Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds. It is not for your sake that I will act, says the Lord GOD; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel. "Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now inhabited and fortified.' Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places, and replanted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it.

**Responsorial.** *Ez. 11: 19, 20*

**R:** I will take out from their flesh the heart of stone and I will give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my decrees; \* they will be my people and I will be their God.

**V:** I will give them a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within them:

**R:** they will be my people and I will be their God.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 95, 1 – 2*

*I will put my law in their souls.*

**The beginning of the “Discourse on the beatitudes” of St. Leo the Great, pope.**

Dearly beloved, when our Lord was preaching the Good News of the Kingdom and healing various infirmities throughout Galilee, the renown of his powers had spread to the whole of Syria and great crowds flocked to the heavenly physician from everywhere in Judea. Since faith impeded by human ignorance is slow to accept what it does not see and to hope for what

it is unacquainted with, these men had to be strengthened with divine instruction and spurred on by physical benefits and visible miracles. In this way, they would not doubt that his teaching brought salvation when they experienced his gracious power.

So our Lord, to replace external healing with interior remedies and to attend to their souls after healing their bodies, withdrew to a neighbouring mountain, away from the surrounding crowds. He called the apostles to himself to fill them with more sublime teaching from that mysterious place. From the very nature of the place and of his deeds, he showed that he was the one who once had deigned to speak to Moses. Then, indeed, he spoke with more awesome justice, but now with more blessed mercy, in fulfilment of what had been promised by the prophet Jeremiah: “Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law within them and I will write it upon their hearts” (Jer. 31: 31, 33; cfr. Heb. 8: 8).

So he who had spoken to Moses spoke also to the apostles and the swiftly writing hand of the Word established the decrees of the New Testament in the hearts of his disciples. There was no surrounding thickness of cloud, as on the former occasion, nor were the people frightened from approaching the mountain, by dreadful sounds and flashes of lightning, but the calmness of his speech was evident to those present. In this way, the harshness of the law would be taken away by the gentleness of grace and the spirit of adoption would remove servile dread.

Christ’s sayings, then, proclaim the nature of his teaching; those who wish to achieve everlasting blessedness may recognize the stages by which to make the most favourable progress. “Blessed”, he says, “are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:3). It might well be uncertain to which poor the Truth was referring if he said, “Blessed are the poor”, and added nothing as to how one should understand the condition of the poor. Merely that poverty which many suffer through severe, cruel necessity, might have seemed to suffice for meriting the kingdom of heaven. But when he says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit”, he shows that the kingdom of heaven will be given to those whom lowliness of heart, rather than lack of means, commends.

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 77: 1-2*

**R:** Mark my teaching, O my people; \* listen to the words I am to speak.

**V:** I will tell you a story with a meaning, I will expound the riddle of things past;

**R:** listen to the words I am to speak.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Dn. 5: 1 – 2, 5 – 9, 13 – 17, 25 – 31*

*The divine judgement during the banquet of Belshaz'zar.*

**A reading from the prophet Daniel.**

King Belshaz'zar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in front of the thousand. Belshaz'zar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.

Immediately the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lamp-stand; and the king saw the hand as it wrote. Then the king's colour changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together.

The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chalde'ans, and the astrologers. The king said to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. Then King Belshaz'zar was greatly alarmed, and his colour changed; and his lords were perplexed. Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king said to Daniel, "You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. I have heard of you that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation; but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the

writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Then Daniel answered before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, TEKEL, and PERES. This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Then Belshaz'zar commanded, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put about his neck, and proclamation was made concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

That very night Belshaz'zar the Chalde'an king was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 74: 6, 8, 9; Ap. 14: 9, 10*

**R:** Do not raise your head against heaven, because judgement comes from God: it is he who knocks down one and raises up the other. \* In the hand of the Lord is a chalice: all the wicked of the earth will drink from it.

**V:** Whoever adores the beast and his statue, will drink the wine of the wrath of God.

**R:** In the hand of the Lord is a chalice: all the wicked of the earth will drink from it.

**Second Reading.** *Cc. 10, 1 – 12, 1; 13,1*

*We await the prize, full of hope.*

**A reading from the “Homily” of a second century author.**

Brethren, let us do the will of the Father who has called us so that we may have life and practise virtue more faithfully. And let us part company with wickedness, sin's fellow traveller, and with ungodliness that brings evil down on our heads. If on the contrary we are intent on doing good, we shall be at peace. For this reason those who are led astray by human fears and who prefer present enjoyment to the promise of happiness in the future, cannot find any peace. They cannot know what torment worldly pleasure

brings and what joy the next world has in store for us. It would not be so bad if their activity was confined to themselves but their bad example affects simple, innocent people and they forget that besides themselves those who listen to them will also be involved in judgement.

Let it be our concern then to serve God with a pure heart and we shall live good lives. If we are unwilling to serve him because we do not believe in God's promises, woe betide us. For the prophetic message is this: 'Unhappy are the fickle who will not stand firm (cfr. Sir. 2: 12-13), who say: this was what our fathers told us, but though we have waited day after day we have no evidence that what they say is true. You fools, compare yourselves to a tree, to a vine for example. First it sheds its leaves, then it becomes a shoot, then an unripe grape, then in due season it bears ripe fruit. It is the same with my people. They must first know instability and distress before finding happiness'.

And so, my dear brethren, let us not be fickle; let us be patient and hope, so that we may gain the reward. God is faithful and he will make good his promise to reward everyone according to his deeds. If we practise justice before God, we shall enter into his kingdom and we shall receive the promised blessings which ear has not heard nor eye seen nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive (cfr. 1 Cor. 2: 9).

Therefore let us await the kingdom of God in love and holiness at every hour, since we do not know the day when the Lord will appear. Let us repent at once, living sober and upright lives, for we are men of great wickedness and folly. Let us wipe away our former sins, doing penance from our hearts so that we may be saved. We are not to curry favour with men, but we should seek the approval not only of one another but also of those outside the Church by our holy lives: God's name must not be blasphemed because of us (cfr. Rm. 2: 24).

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 15: 58; 2 Thes. 3: 13*

**R:** Stand firm, immovable in your resolve, doing your full share continually in the task the Lord has given you, \* since you know that in the Lord's service you cannot labour in vain.

**V:** Never weary of doing good,

**R:** since you know that in the Lord's service you cannot labour in vain.

**Gospel.** *Lk. 21: 1 – 4*

*He saw a poor widow who threw in two copper coins.*

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

He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury; and he saw a poor widow put in two copper coins. And he said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all the living that she had."

## TUESDAY

### CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ez. 37: 1 – 14*

*The resurrection of the people of God,  
Vision of the revitalised bones.*

**A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.**

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me round among them; and behold, there were very many upon the valley; and lo, they were very dry. And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Again he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And as I looked, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host.

Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.' Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you

shall live, and I will place you in your own land; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done it, says the LORD."

**Responsorial.** *Ez. 37: 12, 13; Jn. 11: 25*

**R:** Behold, I will open your graves, I will raise you from your tombs, O my people, \* and you will know that I am the Lord.

**V:** I am the resurrection and the life: he who believes in me, even if he dies will live.

**R:** And you will know that I am the Lord.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 95, 2 – 3*

*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*

**A reading from the “Discourse on the beatitudes” of St. Leo the Great, pope.**

It is certain that the poor more easily achieve the blessing of humility than the rich. Gentleness goes with poverty, pride more commonly with riches. And yet, very many rich people do use their wealth for works of charity rather than as a means to puff their pride. This spirit counts as among its greatest profits what it spends in relieving distress and hardship in others.

In this virtue all classes and conditions of men meet, for they can share a common purpose, while differing in wealth. It does not matter how unequal they are in earthly possessions when they are seen to be equal in spiritual blessings. Poverty is blessed, then, when it is not beguiled by a longing for earthly goods and does not seek increase of the world’s riches, but desires to be enriched with heavenly blessings.

Next to our Lord, the apostles were foremost in giving us an example of this noble poverty. They left all of their possessions at once at the call of their heavenly Master. By a sudden conversion they were changed from fishermen into fishers of men (cfr. Mt. 4: 9), and they induced many others to follow their example by imitating their faith, at the time when all of those original sons of the Church were of one heart and there was one mind among believers (Act. 4: 32). Dividing all of their goods and possessions, they were enriched with eternal blessings through their generous poverty. Following the apostles’ preaching, they rejoiced in having nothing from this world and possessing all things with Christ.



So the blessed apostle Peter said, when the lame man asked him for alms as he was entering the temple: “Silver and gold I have none; but what I have, I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk” (Act. 3: 6). What could be more sublime than this humility, what richer than this poverty? He does not have resources of money, but he has gifts of nature. By his word Peter heals the man whom his mother bore disabled. He had not Caesar’s image on a coin, but he restored the image of Christ in that man.

The man who was restored to health was not the only one to profit from the riches of this treasure. There were five thousand men too who found faith at the apostle’s word because of that miraculous cure (Act. 4: 4). The poor man who had nothing to give to the beggar gave divine grace in abundance – he healed a cripple’s feet, and he brought thousands of believers soundness of heart; those whom he found lame he made agile in Christ.

**Responsorial.** *Mt. 5: 1-3; Is. 66: 2*

**R:** The disciples came to Jesus, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: \* Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**V:** This is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

**R:** Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Dn. 6: 3 – 27 (vulg. 6: 4 – 27)*

*Daniel freed from the pit of lions.*

**A reading from the prophet Daniel.**

Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. Then the presidents and the satraps sought

to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom; but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful and no error or fault was found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live for ever! All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counsellors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict. When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem; and he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the interdict, "O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that any man who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked."

Then they answered before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no heed to you, O king, or the interdict you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed, and set his mind to deliver Daniel; and he laboured till the sun went down to rescue him. Then these men came by agreement to the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance which the king establishes can be changed." Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den,

and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.

Then the king went to his palace, and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. When he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish and said to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live for ever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong." Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God. And the king commanded, and those men who had accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions -- they, their children, and their wives; and before they reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring for ever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Wis. 10: 12, 11*

**R:** The Lord will preserve him from his enemies and will grant him victory in a hard battle, \* so that he may know that wisdom is more powerful than everything.

**V:** He will assist him against the deception of his adversaries.

**R:** so that he may know that wisdom is more powerful than everything.

**Second Reading.** *Cc. 13, 2 – 14, 5*

*The living Church is the body of Christ.*

**A reading from the "Homily" of a second century author.**

The Lord says: 'My name is blasphemed among the Gentiles (cfr. Is. 52: 5), but woe to him through whom my name is blasphemed' (cfr. Rm. 2: 24). Why is it blasphemed? Because we do not practise what we preach. The pagans hear us proclaiming the words of God and they marvel at their beauty and nobility, but when they realize that we Christians do not live up to our principles, they begin to blaspheme and say that our religion is an old wives' tale.

For instance they hear us telling them that God says: 'It is no thanks to you if you love those who love you but it is thanks to you if you love your enemies and those who hate you' (cfr. Mt. 5: 46). They are amazed by the goodness and sublimity of what they hear, but when they watch us not only not loving our enemies but hating our friends into the bargain, they deride us and blaspheme God's name.

My dear brethren, if we do the will of God our Father, we shall belong to the first Church, the spiritual Church, founded before the sun and the moon. But if we refuse to do his will, we shall exemplify in ourselves that saying of the scriptures, 'My house has become a house of thieves' (cfr. Jer. 7: 11; Mt. 21: 13). And so let us resolve to belong to the living Church of life that we may find salvation.

You know very well, I am sure, that the living Church 'is the body of Christ' (1 Cor. 12: 27). For the scripture says: 'God made man male and female' (Gen. 1: 27; 5: 2). Now Christ is the male, the Church is the female. We have the authority of the Bible and the apostles for saying that the Church is not founded only at the present time but was from the beginning. It belonged to the spiritual sphere, as Jesus did, and it was revealed in the last days for our salvation. But spiritual as it is, the Church was revealed to us in the flesh of Christ, thus proving to us that anyone who keeps its presence alive in his flesh and does not banish it from there, will receive it in the Holy Spirit. This flesh is a type of the spirit and no one who destroys the type can expect to receive the original reality. So then, keep guard over the flesh, if you wish to receive a share of the spirit. And if we can say that the flesh is the Church and Christ is the spirit, whoever violates the flesh, violates the Church also. Such a man will have no share in the spirit, which is in Christ. From this it will be clear what an infinite capacity the flesh has for sharing the life of the Holy Spirit, nor can anyone predict what blessings the Lord has prepared for his elect.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Jer. 7: 3; Jam. 4: 8*

**R:** Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your lives and your deeds; \* then shall I dwell here among you.

**V:** Come close to God, and he will come close to you. You that are sinners must wash your hands clean; you that are given to compromise must purify the intention of your hearts;

**R:** then shall I dwell here among you.

**Gospel.** *Lk. 21: 5 – 11*

*There will not remain stone upon stone.*

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

And as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, "As for these things that you see, the days will come when there shall not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

And they asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign when this is about to take place?" And he said, "Take heed that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified; for this must first take place, but the end will not be at once."

Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

## WEDNESDAY

### CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ez. 37: 15 – 28*

*A “sign” that reveals the unification of Judah and Israel.*

**A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.**

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take a stick and write on it, `For Judah, and the children of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write upon it, `For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him'; and join them together into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. And when your people say to you, `Will you not show us what you mean by these?' say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (which is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him; and I will join with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand.

When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, then say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all sides, and bring them to their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves any more with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. "My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes.

They shall dwell in the land where your fathers dwelt that I gave to my servant Jacob; they and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever; and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My dwelling place shall be

with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I the LORD sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore."

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Ez. 37: 21, 22; Jn. 10: 16*

**R:** Behold, I will take the children of Israel, I will gather them from every part, I will make of them only one people: \* and they will become only one flock and only one shepherd.

**V:** I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold: these too I must lead,

**R:** and they will become only one flock and only one shepherd.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 95, 4 – 5*

*The happiness of Christ's kingdom.*

**A reading from the "Discourse on the beatitudes" of St. Leo the Great, pope.**

After proclaiming that the poor are blessed, our Lord added: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Mt. 5: 4). Dearly beloved, it is not the mourning for this world's woes which gains eternal comfort, nor do the lamentations and the complaints poured out by the human race at large make any one blessed. The sighs of the saints, the tears that bring blessedness have another source. Godly sorrow mourns for others' sins or one's own: it does not grieve for the acts of divine justice but for the sins of man's wickedness. More to be lamented here than the one who suffers evil is the one who does evil, for his wickedness thrusts the sinner down into punishment, while his patience brings the good man to glory.

Next our Lord said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Mt. 5: 5). It is to the meek and the gentle, the humble and the unassuming, to those who are ready to bear any injury that the earth is promised as their possession. You must not think that this inheritance is something negligible or paltry, as if it were distinct from a dwelling-place in heaven: in fact you must understand that none but the meek will enter the kingdom of heaven. The earth which is promised to the meek, which will be given to the gentle as their inheritance, is the body of the saints raised up to eternal happiness because of their humility and clothed in the glory of immortality. No longer opposed to the spirit in any way, it will be in perfect

agreement and unity with the will of the soul. Then the outer self will belong to the inner self in untroubled and secure possession. Then the mind absorbed in the contemplation of God, will not find any impediment in that which are the weaknesses of the flesh, nor will it be necessary anymore to say: “A corruptible body weighs down the soul and the tent of clay weighs down the mind with many thoughts” (Wis. 9: 15), since the earth will not be anymore hostile to its inhabitants nor will it rebel against his rule.

This is the inheritance that the meek will possess in lasting peace, and nothing will ever diminish their right to it. Then this perishable nature will put on the imperishable and this mortal nature will put on immortality (1 Cor. 15: 54). What was a risk to the soul will become a reward, what was a burden will be a source of honour.

**Responsorial.** *1 Pet. 2: 20, 21; 3: 14*

**R:** But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. \* To this you were called.

**V:** Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.

**R:** To this you were called.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Dn. 8: 1 – 26*

*Vision of the sheep and the goat.*

*Victory and defeat of the Greek kings.*

**A reading from the prophet Daniel.**

In the third year of the reign of King Belshaz'zar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first.

And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the capital, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision, and I was at the river U'lai. I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, a ram standing on the bank of the river. It had two horns; and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward; no beast could stand



before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power; he did as he pleased and magnified himself.

As I was considering, behold, a he-goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the river, and he ran at him in his mighty wrath. I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him and struck the ram and broke his two horns; and the ram had no power to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled upon him; and there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power. Then the he-goat magnified himself exceedingly; but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven. Out of one of them came forth a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land. It grew great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them.

It magnified itself, even up to the Prince of the host; and the continual burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown.

And the host was given over to it together with the continual burnt offering through transgression; and truth was cast down to the ground, and the horn acted and prospered.

Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to the one that spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled under foot?" And he said to him, "For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the U'lai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." So he came near where I stood; and when he came, I was frightened and fell upon my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end."

As he was speaking to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and set me on my feet.

He said, "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation; for it pertains to the appointed time of the end. As for the ram which you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. And the he-goat is the king of Greece; and the great horn between his eyes is the first king. As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. And at the latter end of their rule, when the transgressors have reached their full measure, a king of bold countenance, one who understands riddles, shall arise.

His power shall be great, and he shall cause fearful destruction, and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people of the saints. By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall magnify himself. Without warning he shall destroy many; and he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes; but, by no human hand, he shall be broken. The vision of the evenings and the mornings which has been told is true; but seal up the vision, for it pertains to many days hence."

**Responsorial.** *Dan. 3: 44- 45; cfr. Sir. 36: 2, 7*

**R:** Let all those who do evil to your servants be confused, let them be covered with shame with all their power; and let their strength be broken! \*  
Let them know that you are the Lord, the only God.

**V:** Infuse your fear over the nations who have not searched for you, so that they may narrate your wonders.

**R:** Let them know that you are the Lord, the only God.

**Second Reading.** *Cc. 15, 1 – 17, 2*

*Let us convert to the Lord who has called us.*

**A reading from the “Homily” of a second century author.**

I regard my counsel about self-control and chastity as very important indeed because anyone who heeds it will save himself and help to save me too, his mentor. It is no small thing to help to rescue and set on the right path a lost soul, and a dialogue in faith and love between Christians is something to thank God the Creator for. Let us persevere then in the faith and in the holiness of life and open our hearts to God in prayer,

remembering his words: 'While you are still speaking, I will answer: behold, I am with you' (cfr. Is. 58: 9).

How encouraging these words are, showing us as they do that God is ever more ready to give than we are to ask. His generosity is open to all of us but we must not envy one another such good fortune. God's message brings delight to those who obey him but judgement to those who disobey.

And so, brethren, everything conspires to make us repent and we must not lose the chance of turning to Jesus and answering his call. We shall all experience his compassion if we live disciplined lives and master our souls by not yielding to self-indulgence. Remember that the 'day of judgement is coming like a blazing furnace (Mal. 3: 19) and the heavens shall melt and all the earth too like molten lead in the fire (cfr. 2 Pet. 3: 16), and every human action, even the most secret, will be revealed'. Almsgiving is one form of repentance and a good one too; fasting is better than prayer; but almsgiving is better than both, because charity covers a multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4: 8). Prayer is a sure shield against death, and blessed is the man found perfect in these three ways. One last word, almsgiving lightens the load of sin.

Let us repent then with all our heart so that none of us may be lost. It is our duty as Christians to rescue people from idolatry and to instruct them in the faith but it is even more important that those who already know God should not perish. Let us collaborate in helping those whose faith is weak so that by our mutual advice and example we may all be saved.

**Responsorial.** *Jude 21; cf. Tit. 2: 12*

**R:** Keep yourselves in the love of God, \* looking forward to the day when our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy will give eternal life.

**V:** We must renounce godless ways and worldly desires, and live a life of temperance, honesty, and godliness in the present age,

**R:** looking forward to the day when our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy will give eternal life.

**Gospel.** *Lk. 21: 12 – 19*

*You will be hated by all because of my name,  
But not even a hair of your head will perish.*

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

But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be a time for you to bear testimony. Settle it therefore in your minds, not to meditate beforehand how to answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and friends, and some of you they will put to death; you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.

## THURSDAY

### CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ez. 38: 14 – 39: 10*

*Vision of the final days.*

**A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.**

"Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, you will bestir yourself and come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army; you will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

"Thus says the Lord GOD: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them? But on that day, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, says the Lord GOD, my wrath will be roused. For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; the fish of the sea, and

the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground.

I will summon every kind of terror against Gog, says the Lord GOD; every man's sword will be against his brother. With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples that are with him, torrential rains and hailstones, fire and brimstone. So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

"And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; and I will turn you about and drive you forward, and bring you up from the uttermost parts of the north, and lead you against the mountains of Israel; then I will strike your bow from your left hand, and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples that are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the wild beasts to be devoured. You shall fall in the open field; for I have spoken, says the Lord GOD.

I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands; and they shall know that I am the LORD. "And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let my holy name be profaned any more; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, says the Lord GOD. That is the day of which I have spoken. "Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go forth and make fires of the weapons and burn them, shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, handpikes and spears, and they will make fires of them for seven years; so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests, for they will make their fires of the weapons; they will despoil those who despoiled them, and plunder those who plundered them, says the Lord GOD.

**Responsorial.** *Ez. 38: 19; Mt. 24: 27*

**R:** In my jealousy and in my burning anger I declare: \* in that day there will be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.

**V:** For as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man.

**R:** In that day there will be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 95, 6 – 7*

*Happy the soul that yearns for this food.*

**A reading from the “Discourse on the beatitudes” of St. Leo the Great, pope.**

The Lord says: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Mt. 5:6). This hunger is not for bodily food; this thirst is not for earthly drink. These seek their satisfaction in the food of righteousness and desire to be filled with the Lord himself by being introduced into the secret of all mysteries. Happy the soul which desires the food of righteousness and thirsts for such a drink; had it not already tasted of their sweetness, it would not seek after them. When the soul harkens to the spirit of the prophet saying, “Taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 33:9), it has already received some part of the heavenly sweetness, and been inflamed with love for this purest of joys. Henceforth, despising all worldly things, it is totally consumed with the desire to feast on righteousness, and to grasp the full meaning of that first commandment: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Lk. 10: 27): for to love God is nothing other than to love righteousness.

Just as, in that commandment, care of our neighbour is closely linked with love of God, so in this passage the virtue of mercy is joined to the desire for righteousness. And we read: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt. 5: 7).

Christian man, recognize the great worth of the wisdom that is yours. Recognize too the discipline you must exercise, and the great prize you are called to. Mercy demands that you be merciful, righteousness that you are righteous, so that the Creator may be shown forth in the creature and that, in the mirror of man’s heart as in the lines of a portrait, the image of God may be reflected. The faith of those who do good is untroubled. The things you desire, you will obtain; the things you love, you will possess eternally.

Since, by virtue of your almsgiving, all things are pure to you, you will come to that blessed state which has been promised you in the words of the

Lord: “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God” (Mt. 5: 8). Dearly beloved, great is the happiness of the man for whom such a prize is prepared. But what does it mean, to be pure of heart? Surely, to strive after the virtues we have just mentioned. What mind can fathom, what tongue proclaim, how great is the blessedness of seeing God? Yet, when our human nature is transformed, it will indeed happen that we shall see what no man is able to see. We shall look upon God himself, God as he is, not in a glass darkly, but face to face. Through the inexpressible joy of everlasting contemplation, we shall grasp what no eye has seen nor ear heard nor the heart of man conceived.

**Responsorial.** *Mt. 5: 6; Ps. 35: 10, 9*

**R:** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied; \* Since in you is the source of life, in your light we see the light.

**V:** They will be filled with the abundance of your house and they will drink at the torrents of your delights:

**R:** Since in you is the source of life, in your light we see the light.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Dn. 9: 1 – 4a, 18 – 27*

*Prayer and vision of Daniel.*

**A reading from the prophet Daniel.**

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasu-e'rus, by birth a Mede, who became king over the realm of the Chalde'ans -- in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years which, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and terrible God, who keeps covenant and

steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, O my God, incline your ear and hear; open your eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by your name; for we do not present our supplications before you on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of your great mercy.

O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, give heed and act; delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."

While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God; while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.

He came and he said to me, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you wisdom and understanding.

At the beginning of your supplications a word went forth, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the word and understand the vision. "Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.

Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war; desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

**Responsorial.** *Bar. 2: 16; Dan. 9: 18; Ps. 79: 20*

**R:** Look, Lord, from your holy dwelling, and think of us; incline your ear and listen; \* open your eyes and see our desolation.



**V:** Lift us up, Lord, God of hosts, let your face shine on us and we shall be saved;

**R:** open your eyes and see our desolation

**Second Reading.** *Cc. 18, 1 – 20, 5*

*Let us do works of holiness in order to reach salvation.*

**A reading from the “Homily” of a second century author.**

We Christians should be people who thank God that we are his servants and that we are not godless people under sentence of death. I am myself a grievous sinner, still subject to temptation, still beset by the snares of the devil, but to the best of my ability I strive for holiness so that I may come near it at least, because I am afraid of the judgement to come.

And so brothers and sisters, once the word of the God of truth has been read to you, I always go on to make a personal appeal to you to pay attention to the divine message so that you who hear and I who proclaim the word may be saved. The only reward I ask for is your sincere repentance and your willingness to accept the way of salvation. Only in this way shall we be able to set an example to the young who are prepared to live a good life and take the faith seriously. Nor should we be so foolish as to become annoyed or angry if someone takes us aside and tries to turn us from evil ways. Sometimes our conscience is blinded by self-indulgence and we refuse to listen to advice because our lives are evil or because we are torn by indecision or lack of faith.

Let us persevere in the practise of holiness so that we may finally be saved. Blessed are those who obey these instructions, because even if they have to undergo a brief period of trial in this world they will reap a harvest of everlasting life in the world to come. So the godly should not be depressed by the tribulations of the present time. A life of happiness awaits them and after the resurrection they shall live in everlasting joy with their fathers.

And do not let yourself be distressed by the prosperity of the wicked and the difficulties of God’s servants. We must make an act of faith, brothers and sisters, that our trials come from the living God and that the troubles of the present life are crowned with happiness in the world to come. The faithful do not reap a quick harvest: they have to wait for it to ripen slowly because if God rewarded them quickly religion would be a

career and not the worship of God. It would consist in the pursuit of self-interest, not piety. So for its own sake divine judgement always strikes a spirit which is not holy and throws it into chains.

To the one invisible God, the Father of truth, who sent to us the Saviour and founder of our immortality through whom he revealed to us the truth about our heavenly life, to him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Responsorial.** *Ps. 36: 27; 28: 1*

**R:** Turn away from evil and do good, \* for the Lord loves justice and will never forsake his friends.

**V:** Do not fret because of the wicked; do not envy those who do evil,

**R:** for the Lord loves justice and will never forsake his friends.

**Gospel.** *Lk. 21: 20 – 28*

*Jerusalem will be trampled on by pagans*

*Until their time has been accomplished.*

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

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written.

Alas for those who are with child and for nursing mothers in those days! For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

# FRIDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ez. 40: 1 – 4; 43: 1 – 12; 44: 6 – 9*

*Vision of the restoration of the temple of Israel.*

**A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.**

In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was conquered, on that very day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me in the visions of God into the land of Israel, and set me down upon a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city opposite me. When he brought me there, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like bronze, with a line of flax and a measuring reed in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway. And the man said to me, "Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your mind upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you; declare all that you see to the house of Israel." Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate facing east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the east; and the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with his glory. And the vision I saw was like the vision which I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision which I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple. While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me out of the temple; and he said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel for ever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, neither they, nor their kings, by their harlotry, and by the dead bodies of their kings, by setting their threshold by my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between them and me. They have defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed, so I have consumed them in my anger. Now let them put away their idolatry and the dead bodies of their kings far from me, and I will dwell in their midst for ever.

"And you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple and its appearance and plan, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities. And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, portray the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, and its whole form; and make known to them all its ordinances and all its laws; and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe and perform all its laws and all its ordinances. This is the law of the temple: the whole territory round about upon the top of the mountain shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple. And say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: O house of Israel, let there be an end to all your abominations, in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning it, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. And you have not kept charge of my holy things; but you have set foreigners to keep my charge in my sanctuary. "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Ez. 43: 4-5; cfr. Lk. 2: 27*

**R:** The glory of the Lord entered into the temple by the door that looks towards the east: \* and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the sanctuary.

**V:** His parents brought the child Jesus to the temple:

**R:** and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the sanctuary.

**Second Reading.** *Disc. 95, 8 – 9*

*Abundant peace for the one who loves your name, O Lord.*

**A reading from the “Discourse on the beatitudes” of St. Leo the Great, pope.**

The blessedness of seeing God is rightly promised to those who are pure of heart. For the eye that is filled with dirt cannot see the brightness of the true light; what is joy to the clear, shining mind is punishment to the mind that is stained. Let the darkness of the empty things of this world be set aside and the eyes of the soul be cleansed of all the filth of sin so that the inward sight may enjoy in peace the wonderful vision of God.

We understand the next sentence to refer to the attainment of that blessed vision: “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of

God” (Mt. 5: 9). Dearly beloved, this blessedness does not stem from any ordinary sort of harmony nor from any usual kind of agreement, but from what the apostle meant when he said: “Have peace with God” (Rm. 5: 1); it was of this too that the prophet spoke: “Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble” (Ps. 118: 165).

Not even the closest bonds of friendship or the most exact compatibility of mind can lay claim to this peace, unless they are in harmony with the will of God. Like-mindedness in evil desire, criminal alliances, sinful agreements are all excluded from this peace. Love of the world is not congruous with love of God; nor can a man who does not cut himself off from the generation of the sons of the flesh ever attain to the company of the sons of God. But those do, who with God always in their minds, are eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ep. 4:3), are always faithful to the eternal law, and pray in faith: “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Mt. 6: 10).

They are the peacemakers; they are of one mind in virtue, one heart in holiness; they are to be called sons of God, fellow heirs with Christ: this is the reward for love of God and love of one’s neighbour. A man like this will never suffer calamities, never fear temptations. But when the struggle is over, he will rest in the peace of God, the peace of utter tranquillity, through our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

**Responsorial.** *Ap. 12: 10, 12, 5*

**R:** Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. \* Rejoice, therefore, you heavens and you who inhabit them.

**V:** And her Son was snatched up to God and to his throne.

**R:** Rejoice, therefore, you heavens and you who inhabit them.

**First Reading. Dn. 10: 1 – 21**

*Vision of the man and the apparition of the angel.*

**A reading from the prophet Daniel.**

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshaz'zar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with gold of Uphaz. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the noise of a multitude.

And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me; my radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. Then I heard the sound of his words; and when I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in a deep sleep with my face to the ground.

And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, give heed to the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood up trembling.

Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia and came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come." When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was dumb.

And behold, one in the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me." Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And when he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I am through with him, lo, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none that contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Dan. 10: 12, 19, 21*

**R:** From the first day in which you set your mind to understand and humbled yourself before your God, \* your prayer has been heard and I have come because of your words.

**V:** Do not fear, man greatly loved, I will declare to you that which has been written in the book of truth;

**R:** your prayer has been heard and I have come because of your words.

**Second Reading.** *Book 5*

*Christ our peace has appeared.*

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

We, who have been called by him, have known his glory; we do not draw near to Christ Jesus, the Saviour and judge of all, as to a man, but though the Word became flesh, yet we believe that he is God by nature and that, generated in a mysterious way, he has been given the power over all creatures by God the Father. And now he shines forth on the heavenly throne, he dominates over all and his very strong right hand keeps subjected all those whom he wants; and nothing really can overcome him or elevate itself, so to say, above his power. But Israel did not understand him. They spoke with him almost as if he was a person like us and not God made man.

For this one day they said to him: “Who are you? Who do you claim to be?” (Jn. 8: 25, 53). And: “We do not want to stone you for a good work, but for the blasphemy and because you, who are man, claim to be God” (Jn. 10: 33).

Instead, those who are called to the knowledge of the truth, he says, will see my glory, because I myself, who spoke through the mouths of the prophets, am here (cfr. Is. 52: 6). In fact God the Lord, has appeared to us as it is written: “God, who had already spoken in ancient times many times and in different ways to the fathers through the prophets, in these final days, has spoken to us through his Son whom he has constituted heir of all the things and through whom he has also made the world” (Heb. 1: 1-2). And this must be underlined: that God the Father has created all things through the Son and through him he has spoken to us in the fullness of time: but not as if he was another son, generated according to the flesh from a woman, since the Son is unique, the Word, who is also the creator of the ages, having assumed for us the flesh of our humanity. Christ, our peace, has appeared, he who has removed the obstacle of sin and who has reconciled us with the Father uniting us to himself: through him in fact we have access to the Father. As one who reaches quickly and rapidly he leads prisoner the enemy in order to announce peace and to proclaim the good news, so also he presented himself to the world in the flesh of the Saviour of all of us, and was constituted mediator of peace in front of God the Father, after having eliminated Satan and having destroyed all his hosts.

And since this is the time in which all those who desire it are made participants of every richness, he is always near to those who, believing in him, know how to taste and to fulfil his will, in order to be able to reach and to participate fully in the heavenly graces and to be filled with every good hope: the Saviour in fact is rich with all types of gifts.

**Responsorial.** *Ep. 2: 13-14, 17*

**R:** You who at one time were far away have been brought near thanks to the blood of Christ. \* He in fact is our peace, who has made of the two only one people.

**V:** He has come therefore to announce peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

**R:** He in fact is our peace, who has made of the two only one people



**Gospel.** *Lk. 21: 29 – 33*

*When you see these things happening  
Know that the kingdom of God is near.*

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

And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees; as soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

# SATURDAY

## CYCLE 1

**First Reading.** *Ez. 47: 1 – 12*

*Vision of the water that flows out from the temple.*

**A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.**

Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me round on the outside to the outer gate, that faces toward the east; and the water was coming out on the south side. Going on eastward with a line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep.

Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the loins. Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?"

Then he led me back along the bank of the river. As I went back, I saw upon the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. And he said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the stagnant waters of the sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever the river goes every living creature which swarms will live, and there will be very many fish; for this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. Fishermen will stand beside the sea; from En-ge'di to En-eg'laim it will be a place for the spreading of nets; its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Ez. 47: 1, 9; Jn. 4: 14*

**R:** I saw the water coming out from the right side of the temple; \* and all those to whom this water reaches will live.

**V:** The water that I will give, will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life;

**R:** and all those to whom this water reaches will live.

**Second Reading.** *Book 3, 15 – 16*

*All the glory of the Father, comes from the Son.*

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

“I have glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do” (Jn. 17: 4). All the glory of the Father comes from the Son, because wherever the Son is praised the praise rises up to the Father: he in fact brings to fulfillment the will of the Father. The Son of God was born a man: but the delivery of the Virgin is the power of God. The Son of God is visible as man; but in the works of this man God manifests himself. The Son of God is crucified: but in the cross God overcomes the death of man. Christ the Son of God dies: but in him every man is vivified. The Son of God descends into the underworld, but man is brought back to Heaven. The more they praise these triumphs in Christ, all the more glory rises to God from whom is the Christ.

In this way therefore the Father glorifies the Son on earth and in his turn the Son glorifies with the works of his power the one from whom he proceeds, in front of the ignorance of the pagans and the foolishness of the world. In reality this exchange of glory does not increase the divinity, but constitutes that praise which is born from knowledge in the one who ignored God before. What could the Father from whom everything comes need? Or what could the Son in whom all the fullness of divinity was pleased to dwell lack? Therefore the Father is glorified on earth, when the work desired by him is accomplished.

Let us see what glory the Son expects from the Father; it is quickly said: “And now, Father, it is time for you to glorify me with that glory I had with you before ever the world was. I have made your name known to men” (Jn. 17: 5-6). Therefore the Father was glorified by the works of the Son: in this way it could be understood that he is God, Father of the Only-begotten

God, and it was evident that for our salvation he wanted his Son to be born a man from a Virgin and that in his passion he should fulfill all that which had had a beginning with the delivery of the Virgin.

Therefore the Son of God, most perfect in every respect and born before all ages in the fullness of divinity, now man from the instant of his incarnation, brought to fulfillment the will of the Father even in death; therefore he asks to be glorified before God as he himself glorified the Father on earth: then in fact the power of God was manifested in the flesh to the world which ignored it.

Now then, what is the glorification that he awaits from the Father? Precisely that which he had in his presence before ever the world was. He had the fullness of divinity, and he still has it, since he is the Son of God.

But he who was the Son of God had begun to be also the Son of man: in fact he was the Word made flesh.

He had not lost that which he was, but he had begun to be that which he was not; he had not renounced to his own glory of which he had never been lacking.

Therefore, since the Son is the Word, and the Word has become flesh, and the Word is God who was in the beginning with God, and the Word was the Son before the world could be made: now the Son made man prayed that the man could begin to be for the Father that which the Word was; that all that which was derived from time could receive the light of his glory which is without time, so that the corruptibility of the flesh could be transformed and absorbed by the uncorrupted power of the Spirit of God.

This therefore is the prayer addressed to God, this is the glorification of the Son to the Father, this is the supplication of the flesh: in it everyone will see him on the day of judgement, recognizable by the signs of the cross. In that flesh he was transfigured on the mountain, in it he was raised up to heaven, with it he sits at the right hand of the Father.

**Responsorial.** *Jn. 3: 16; Hab. 3: 13*

**R:** God so loved the world that he gave his Only-begotten Son, \* so that whoever believes in him will not die, but may have eternal life.

**V:** You have come out to save your people, O Lord, to save your consecrated,

**R:** so that whoever believes in him will not die, but may have eternal life.

## CYCLE 2

**First Reading.** *Dn. 12: 1 – 13*

*Prophecy regarding the last day and the resurrection.*

**A reading from the prophet Daniel.**

"At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." Then I Daniel looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. And I said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven; and I heard him swear by him who lives for ever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time; and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be accomplished. I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the issue of these things?" He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but those who are wise shall understand. And from the time that the continual burnt offering is taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But go your way till the end; and you shall rest, and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."

**Responsorial.** *Cfr. Lk. 20: 35, 36, 38*

**R:** Those who are judged worthy of the resurrection of the dead, cannot die:  
\* like children of the resurrection they are similar to the angels and children of God.

**V:** God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, because everyone lives for him.

**R:** Like children of the resurrection they are similar to the angels and children of God.

**Second Reading.** *Book 10, 20*

*Christ spoke of the temple that was His body.*

**A reading from the “Commentary on John” of Origen, presbyter.**

‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’ (Jn. 2: 9). I think that the worldly-minded and those who delight in the things of the senses meant are the Jews here. They are indignant that Jesus has driven out the men who, by their conduct, made his Father’s house a place of business, and they ask for a sign. By this sign, the Son of God, whom they do not recognize, will be seen to act justly. They ask: ‘What sign have you to show for doing this?’ and the Saviour’s reply combines a statement about the temple and a statement about his own body: ‘Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up!’

Both of these – the temple and the body of Jesus – seem to me, according to one interpretation, to be a symbol of the Church. The Church is built of living stones, made a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood (1 Pet. 2: 5), built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ himself being the corner stone (Ep. 2: 20), a real temple. On the other hand, ‘you are the body of Christ and individually members of it’ (1 Cor. 12: 27). For this reason, even if the joining of the temple’s stones seem to be destroyed and, as in the twenty-first psalm, all Christ’s bones seem to be scattered by plotters in persecution and oppression, by those who war against the unity of the temple in persecution, yet the temple will be raised up and the body will rise on the third day, after the present day of evil and the day of consummation which will follow this.

The third day will begin in the new heaven and the new earth when these bones, namely, the whole house of Israel, will be raised up on the great day of the Lord after death has been overcome. And so, the resurrection of Christ in the past after his passion and cross will embrace

the mystery of the resurrection of the whole body of Christ. Just as that physical body of Christ was nailed to the cross and buried and afterwards raised to life, so the whole body of Christ's saints have been nailed to the cross with Christ and now no longer lives. Each one of them, just like Paul, glories in nothing other than the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which he is crucified to the world and the world to him.

So not only has each been crucified with Christ and crucified to the world, but he is also buried with Christ. 'We are buried therefore with Christ' (Rm. 6: 4), says Paul, adding also, as if he had received some pledge of the resurrection, 'and we have risen with him' (cfr. Rm. 6:4).

**Responsorial.** *1 Cor. 6: 19-20; Lev. 11: 43, 44*

**R:** Your body is the temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is God's gift to you. You do not belong to yourselves; you were bought at a price. \* Therefore, honour God in your body.

**V:** You shall not contaminate yourselves; you shall make yourselves holy and keep yourselves holy, because I am holy.

**R:** Therefore, honour God in your body.

**Gospel.** *Lk. 21: 34 – 36*

*Stay awake so that you will have the strength to escape  
from all that has to happen.*

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

"But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man."