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*First Reading*

*Romans 8.5-27*

That is, people who are material think materialistic thoughts; and those who are spiritual, spiritual ones. Materialistic thoughts are death, and spiritual thoughts are life and peace; and that is why materialistic thoughts hate God, and won't obey God's Law—in fact, can't do it; materialistic people can't be pleasing to God.

But you are in the spirit, not matter, if God's spirit has his home in you—and if a person doesn't possess the Prince's spirit, he doesn't belong to him. But then if the Prince is in you, even if your body is dead because of sin, your spirit is life because of his virtue. That is, if the spirit that brought Jesus back to life has its home in you, then that same thing that brought the Prince back from death will give life too to the dead bodies you have because of his spirit that has its home in you.

The point of all of this, brothers and sisters, is that we have no obligation to our bodies to live in a material way; if you live in a material way, you are going to die—and if in the spirit you kill off the body's actions, you will live.

This is because those of you who act based on God's spirit are God's sons. What you have received is not a spirit of slavery that leads back into fear; what you have received is the spirit of sonship, in which we cry "Abba!" ("Papa!"). It is this very spirit that, in union with our own spirit, gives proof that we are God's children.

And, of course, if we are children, then we are heirs, too; we are God's heirs, heirs with the Prince, provided we share his sufferings in order to share his glory. And what I think is that the sufferings of the present moment do not deserve to be compared with the glory that is going to be revealed in us.

In fact, the longing of creation is for the revelation of God's sons to occur. What happened is that creation got trapped into pointlessness, not by anything it did, but because of the one who made it that way; but it had the hope that creation itself would be free from slavery to decay and would find the freedom of the glory of God's children.

That is, we know that every creature has been in pain and agony along with every other right up to the present; and not only that, but we too, even though we have the firstfruits of the spirit, are experiencing pain until we are adopted as sons and our bodies are set free. We have been rescued—but in hope. A hope that sees what it is hoping for is not hope; no one hopes for what he sees is there; and so since we are hoping for something we don't see, we have it only through perseverance.

And because things are this way, the spirit comes to the support of our weakness. We don't even know how to pray the way we should; and so the spirit takes our inarticulate cries and turns them into a plea for us; and the one who searches people's hearts knows what the spirit means, because he is pleading for the sacred people in God's way.

Since you are all children of God through your belief in Jesus as the Prince, God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of his Son, who cries out, "Abba! (Dad!)." Hallelujah!

The Master has not given us a pusillanimous spirit; he has given us a spirit of strength, love, and self-control. God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of his Son, who cries out, "Abba! (Dad!)." Hallelujah!

*Second Reading*                      *The Treatise Against Heresies by St. Irenaeus*

When the Master told his students to "go and teach every nation" and to "bathe them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," he conferred on them the power of giving human beings new life in God.

He had promised through the prophets that in these last days he

would pour his Spirit onto his slaves and maidservants, and that they would prophesy. So when the Son of God became the Son of Man, the Spirit also descended upon him, and in this way became habituated to taking up residence with the human race, to living in men and inhabiting God's creation. The Spirit fulfilled the Father's will in men who had grown old in sin, and gave them new life in the Prince.

Luke says that the Spirit came down on the students at Pentecost, after the Master's ascension, with power to open the gates of life to every nation, and to make the new Treaty known to them. And it was in this way that men of every language joined in singing one song of praise to God, and scattered tribes, restored to unity by the Spirit, were offered to the Father as the firstfruits of all the nations.

This was why the Master had promised to send the Patron; he was to prepare us to be an offering to God. Like dry flour, which cannot become one lump of dough or one loaf of bread without moisture, the multiplicity of all of us could not become one thing in the Prince without the water that comes down from heaven. And like parched ground, which yields no harvest unless it receives moisture, we were once waterless trees that could never have lived and borne fruit without this abundant rainfall from above. Through the Bath that liberates us from change and decay, we have become one thing physically; through the Spirit, we have become one thing in soul.

"The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of good advice and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and respect for God" came down upon the Master, and the Master in his turn gave this Spirit to his Church, sending the Patron from heaven into the whole world, into which, according to his own words, the devil had also been thrown down like lightning.

If we are not to be scorched and made unfruitful, we need the dew of God; and since we have a prosecutor, we need an Attorney for the Defense as well. And so the Master in his pity for human beings, who had fallen into the hands of thugs, once he had bandaged their wounds himself and left for their care two coins bearing the royal image, entrusted them to the Holy Spirit. Now, through the Spirit, the image and inscription of the Father and the Son have been given to us, and it is our duty to use the coin committed to our care and make it yield a rich profit for the Master.

On the day of Pentecost they had all gathered in one place. Suddenly out of the sky, there came the sound of a strong wind, which filled the whole house. Hallelujah!

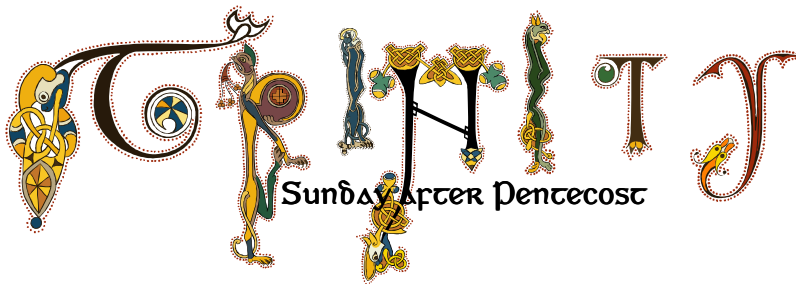
The students had gathered in one room, and suddenly there came a sound from the sky; the sound of a strong wind, which filled the whole house. Hallelujah!

**Prayer**

Dear God, our Father, please have the Spirit you sent on your Church to begin the teaching of the Good News continue to work in the world through the hearts of everyone who believes. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

**Resume with the Te Deum**

**Continue with Monday of the proper week of Ordinary Time**



**First Reading**

**1 Corinthians 2.1-16**

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I didn't come with fancy language or sophisticated reasoning to deliver the message to you about God's secret. I decided that the only thing I was to know while I was with you was Prince Jesus—and Prince Jesus hanging on a cross. And I was feeble and scared and shaking in my bones while I was in front of you; and what I said and the proclamation I was delivering had nothing intellectually persuasive about it; but it was a demonstration of Spirit and

power—and so your belief rested on God’s power and not human wisdom.

Yet what we say is in fact wisdom to those who have reached the goal; but it is a wisdom that is not the wisdom of these times, or the wisdom of the doomed leaders of these times; what we say is the wisdom God kept as a secret—his concealed wisdom, which God had in mind before time began to dignify us with; and none of the leaders of these times recognized it. If they had recognized it, they would not have crucified the master of the dignity.

But as Scripture says, “What God has prepared for those who love him is something ‘no eye has seen or ear heard,’ something that has not entered man’s heart.” And God has disclosed this to us through his Spirit.

That is, the Spirit examines everything, even the depths of God. What I mean is, in human terms, who knows about a man except the spirit the man has inside him? And so with God, the only one who knows about God is God’s Spirit. And what we received is not the world’s spirit, it is the Spirit that comes from God, so that we can see the gifts that have been given us by God—and what we speak about does not come from education and reasoning with human wisdom; it comes from the Spirit’s education, and makes us reason spiritually about spiritual things.

A man who is living a natural life will not accept God’s spirit; it is stupidity to him, and he can’t recognize it, because God’s spirit reasons spiritually. But a spiritual person can reason in both ways, and can’t be out-reasoned by anyone. “Who knows YHWH’s mind? Who is to be His adviser?” But we have the mind of the Prince.

May the glorious God and Father of our Master Prince Jesus give us a spirit of wisdom to penetrate his revelation, and bring us to full knowledge of him; may he illuminate the eyes of our minds to see the great hope of our calling, the wealth of glory he has stored up for the sacred people.

We have not received the spirit of this world; it is the Spirit who comes from God; may he illuminate the eyes of our minds to see the great hope of our calling, the wealth of glory he has stored up for the sacred people.

*Second Reading**Letter to Serapion by St. Athanasius*

It will not be inappropriate to consider the ancient tradition, teaching, and faith of the Catholic Church, which was revealed by the Master, professed by the Emissaries, and preserved by the Fathers; because it is upon this faith that the Church is built, and if anyone were to fall away from it, he would no longer be a Christian either in fact or in name.

We acknowledge the Trinity, which is holy and perfect, to consist of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In this Trinity, there is no intrusion of any foreign element or anything from outside, nor is the Trinity a composite of creative and creative being; it is a totally creative and activating reality, which is self-consistent and undivided in its active power, because the Father makes everything through the Word and in the Holy Spirit, and in this way, the unity of the holy Trinity is preserved. In accordance with this, one God is preached in the Church, one God who is “above everything and pervading everything and in everything.” God is “above everything” as Father, because he is principle and source; he is “pervading everything” through the Word; and he is “in everything” in the Holy Spirit.

When he wrote to the Corinthians about spiritual matters, Paul traced all reality back to one God, the Father, when he said, “Now there are various gifts, but the same Spirit, and varieties of service, but the same Master; and there are varieties of tasks, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone.”

Even the gifts that the Spirit dispenses to individuals are given by the Father through the Word. That is, all that belongs to the Father also belongs to the Son, and so that graces given by the Son in the Spirit are true gifts of the Father. Similarly, when the Spirit has his home in us, the Word who bestows the Spirit is in us too, and the Father is present in the Word. This is the meaning of the text, “My Father and I will come to him and make our home with him,” because the radiance is where the light is, and where the radiance is are its power and resplendent grace.

This is also Paul’s teaching in his second letter to the Corinthians: “The blessings of our Master Prince Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.” That is, grace and the gift of the Trinity are given by the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Just as grace is given from the Father through the Son, so there could be no communication of the gift to us except in the Holy



Spirit; but when we share in the Spirit, we possess the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the fellowship of the Spirit himself.

We should worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; we should praise and elevate him above everything forever.

May God be blessed in the dome of heaven, and all praise and glory come to him forever. We should praise and elevate him above all forever.

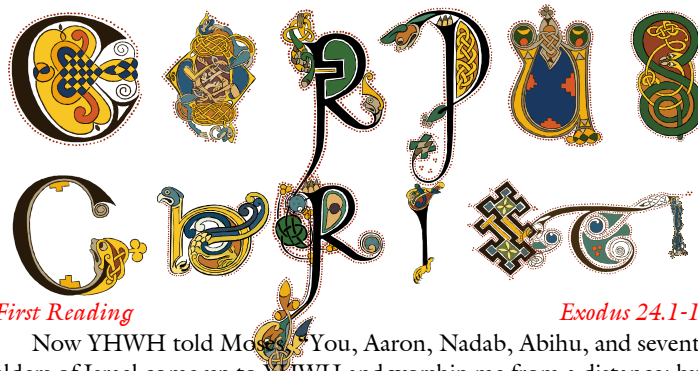
#### Prayer

Dear God, we praise you, as omnipotent Father, our Prince, Master, and Savior, and Spirit of love; and since you reveal yourself in the depths of your being and draw us to share in your life and love, one God in three Persons, please be near the people formed in your image, and close to the world your love brings to life. We make this request of you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one true God, living through all the ages of ages. Amen.

#### Resume with the Te Deum

CONTINUE WITH MONDAY OF THE PROPER WEEK OF ORDINARY TIME

### THURSDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY



*First Reading*

*Exodus 24.1-11*

Now YHWH told Moses, "You, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel come up to YHWH and worship me from a distance; but Moses alone is to come near YHWH; they are not to approach closely, and the people are not to go up to me."

So Moses came to the people and told them all that YHWH had said and decided; and the whole people answered in unison, “We will do everything that YHWH has told us.” Then Moses wrote down everything that YHWH had said. He rose early the next day and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

Then he sent some young men from the descendants of Israel to offer holocausts and peace sacrifices of oxen to YHWH; Moses took half of the blood and put it into basins, and splashed half on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Treaty and read it out to the people, and they said, “We will do everything YHWH has told us, and obey him.” Then Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the Treaty which YHWH has made with you in accordance with all that he has said.”

Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something that looked like pavement of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But he did not lay a hand on the nobles among the descendants of Israel, and after they had seen God, they could still eat their meals.

I am bread for life; your ancestors ate manna in the desert and died; but this is the bread that comes down from heaven for people to eat and not die.

I am living bread that comes down from heaven, and anyone who eats this bread will live forever. This is the bread that comes down from heaven for people to eat and not die.

*Second Reading Opusculum on Corpus Christi by St. Thomas Aquinas*

Since it was the will of the only Son God ever fathered that human beings would share his divinity, he took on our nature so that by becoming man he could make human beings gods. In addition, when he took our matter, he dedicated the whole of its reality to our rescue. He offered his body to God the Father on the altar of the cross as a sacrifice for our being brought into harmony with God. He shed his blood for our ransom and purification, so that we would be redeemed from our miserable state of bondage and washed clean of all sin. But to ensure that the memory of so great a gift would remain with us forever, he left his

body as food and his blood as drink for the faithful to consume in the form of bread and wine.

This priceless, miraculous banquet brings us rescue and contains all that can be enjoyed. Could anything be of greater intrinsic value? Under the old Law, it was the flesh of calves and goats that was offered, but here, the Prince himself, the true God, is set before us as our food. What could be more miraculous than this? No other sacrament has greater healing power; though it, sins are purged away, virtues are increased, and the soul is enriched with an abundance of every spiritual gift. It is offered in the Church for the living and the dead, so that what was established for the rescue of everyone will be beneficial to everyone. Yet, in the end, no one can fully express the enjoyable qualities of this sacrament, in which spiritual delight is tasted at its very source, and in which we renew the memory of that surpassing love for us which the Prince revealed in his suffering.

It was to impress the vastness of this love more firmly upon the hearts of the faithful that our Master instituted this sacrament at the Last Supper. As he was on the point of leaving the world to go to the Father, after celebrating the Passover with his students, he left it as a perpetual memorial of his suffering. It was the fulfillment of ancient figures and the greatest of all his miracles, while for those who were to experience the sorrow of his departure, it was destined to be a unique and lasting consolation.

Know that this bread is the body of the Prince which hung upon the cross, and in this cup, the Prince's blood which flowed from his side. And so take and eat his body, and take and drink his blood; and you will become parts of his body.

Eat this sacred food, so that your bond of unity with the Prince will never be broken; drink this sacred blood, the price he paid for you, so that you will never lose heart because of your sinfulness; and you will become parts of his body.

#### Prayer

Master, Prince Jesus, as we worship you living among us in the sacrament of your body and blood, may we offer to our Father in heaven a solemn pledge of our love, and may we offer our brothers and sisters a life

poured out in loving service of that Kingdom where you are alive and reigning with the Father and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

Te Deum

We sing your praise as God;  
we humbly call you Master.  
The whole world honors you  
as its eternal Father.  
all the angels too,  
the heavens and the Powers of the universe,  
the cherubim and seraphim  
cry out in chorus,  
“Holy! Holy! Holy Master! God of power and might—  
Heaven and earth are filled with the majesty of your glory!”  
The glorious college of Apostles,  
the venerable guild of Prophets,  
the white-robed army of Martyrs chant their praise to you;  
the holy Church throughout the world acclaims you  
as Father of unfathomable majesty,  
your true and only Son as worthy of our adoration,  
and the Holy Spirit as our Patron.  
You, our Prince, are the King of Glory,  
the ever-eternal Son of the Father.  
And as you undertook to set man free,  
you did not recoil at the Virgin’s womb;  
and when you overcame the sting of death,  
you opened the Kingdom of Heaven to us believers;  
and now you are enthroned beside God in the glory of the Father;  
And we believe you will return to be our judge.  
And so we beg you, please come to the aid of your family,  
whom you have bought with your priceless blood.  
Record them with the Sacred People in glory.  
Please save your people, Master, and bless your inheritance,  
And be their King and support from now for ever.  
We sing your praises each and every day,  
and sanctify your name for ages and for ages upon ages.

Grant us the blessing, Master, for this day,  
 to keep us free of sin.  
 Have your mercy, Master, descend upon us,  
 since we have put our trust in you.  
 I have placed my trust in you, my Master;  
 never let my hopes be shattered.



*First Reading*

*Romans 8.28-39*

And we know that for those who love God, everything works together for good—that is, for those called as he intends them to be. This is because he knew beforehand who they were, and brought it about beforehand that they would be formed into a counterpart of his son, so that he would be the firstborn of a large family of brothers and sisters. And those he predetermined to be this way are the ones he called; and the ones he called are the ones he made virtuous; and the ones he made virtuous are the ones he made glorious.

Then what is the upshot of this? If God is for us, who is against us? He didn't spare his own Son; he gave him away for all of us; and so why wouldn't he give us every other gift along with Him? Who is there to bring the charge against the ones God has chosen? The God who made them virtuous. Who is the one to judge their case? Prince Jesus, who died—or rather, who came back to life, who is on the throne with God, and who is the attorney for the defense.

Then what can take us away from the Prince's love? Hardship? Suffering? Oppression? Hunger? Nakedness? Danger? War? As Scripture says, "For your sake we keep dying all day long; we are thought of as sheep ready for slaughter;" but through all of this, we win the great

victory because of the one who loved us. And I am convinced that I can't be separated by death—or life, or angels, or the powers of the heavens, or anything present or future, or any force up above me or below me, or any other creature—from the love of God that is in Prince Jesus our Master.

When we were dead through sin, God brought us back to life again through the Prince, because he loved us with that great a love.

It was so that he could reveal for all ages to come the immeasurable riches of his grace, because he loved us with that great a love.

*Second Reading      Opusculum on Lignum Vitae by St. Bonaventure*

Take thought now, redeemed human being, and consider how great and deserving is the one who is hanging on the cross for you. His death brings the dead back to life; but at his passing, heaven and earth and plunged into mourning, and hard rocks split apart.

It was a divine decree that permitted one of the soldiers to open his sacred side with a lance; this was done so that the Church would be formed from the side of the Prince as he slept the sleep of death on the cross, and to fulfill the Scripture, "They will look on the one they have pierced." The blood and water which flowed out at that moment were the price of our rescue. Since this stream flowed from what might be called the fountain in the secret cave of our Master's heart, it gave the sacraments of the Church the power to confer the life of grace, while for those already living in the Prince, it became a spring of running, living water welling up to eternal life.

So then come forward, lover of the Prince. Imitate the dove that "nests in a hole in the cliff," and keeps watch like "the sparrow that finds a home." There, like the dove, hide you chicks, the fruit of your chaste love; press your lips to the fountain, "draw water from the wells of your Savior," because "this is the spring flowing out of the center of paradise, dividing into four rivers," flooding devout hearts, watering the whole earth, and making it fertile.

Run with eager desire to this source of life and light, all of you who are vowed to God's service. Come, whoever you are, and call to him with all the strength of your heart, "Indescribable beauty of the Supreme God, and purest radiance of eternal light, life that gives everyone life,

light that is the source of every other light, preserving in everlasting splendor the millions of flames that have shone before the throne of your divinity from the dawn of time—eternal, inaccessible fountain, clear and sweet stream flowing from a hidden spring, unseen by mortal eyes, no one can fathom your depths or survey your boundaries, no one can measure your breadth, nothing can defile your purity. From you flows “the river which gladdens the city of God” and makes us exclaim with joy and gratitude in hymns of praise to you, because we know by our own experience that “the source of life is with you, and in your illumination we see light.”

Praise the Master, my soul, and never forget what he has done for you. He saves your life from ruin, and crowns you with mercy and kindness.

Taste and see that the Master is good. He saves your life from ruin and crowns you with mercy and kindness.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since we are honoring the heart of your Son which was broken by man’s cruelty, yet is a symbol of love’s triumph and pledge of all that man is called to be, please teach us to see the Prince in the lives we touch, to offer him living worship by love-filled service to our brothers and sisters. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

#### Te Deum

We sing your praise as God;  
we humbly call you Master.  
The whole world honors you  
as its eternal Father.  
all the angels too,  
the heavens and the Powers of the universe,  
the cherubim and seraphim  
cry out in chorus,  
“Holy! Holy! Holy Master! God of power and might—  
Heaven and earth are filled with the majesty of your glory!”  
The glorious college of Apostles,

the venerable guild of Prophets,  
the white-robed army of Martyrs chant their praise to you;  
the holy Church throughout the world acclaim you  
as Father of unfathomable majesty,  
your true and only Son as worthy of our adoration,  
and the Holy Spirit as our Patron.  
You, our Prince, are the King of Glory,  
the ever-eternal Son of the Father.  
And as you undertook to set man free,  
you did not recoil at the Virgin's womb;  
and when you overcame the sting of death,  
you opened the Kingdom of Heaven to us believers;  
and now you are enthroned beside God in the glory of the Father;  
And we believe you will return to be our judge.  
And so we beg you, please come to the aid of your family,  
whom you have bought with your priceless blood.  
Record them with the Sacred People in glory.  
Please save your people, Master, and bless your inheritance,  
And be their King and support from now for ever.  
We sing your praises each and every day,  
and sanctify your name for ages and for ages upon ages.  
Grant us the blessing, Master, for this day,  
to keep us free of sin.  
Have your mercy, Master, descend upon us,  
since we have put our trust in you.  
I have placed my trust in you, my Master;  
never let my hopes be shattered.



SATURDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

 IMMACULATE  HEART  
OF  MARY*Third Reading**A Sermon by St. Lawrence Justinian*

While Mary contemplated all she had come to know through reading, listening, and observing, she grew in faith, increased in her value to God, and was more illuminated by wisdom and consumed by the fire of love. The heavenly mysteries were opened to her, and she was filled with joy; she became fruitful by the Spirit, was being directed by God, and was watched over protectively while on earth.

So remarkable are divine graces that they elevate a person from the lowest depths to the highest summit, and transform one to greater holiness. The mind of the Virgin was so completely blessed through the indwelling and guidance of the Spirit, that it was always and in every way open to the power of the Word of God. She was not led by her own senses or her own will; and in this way she achieved externally through her body what wisdom from inside her gave to her faith. It was appropriate for divine Wisdom, which created a home for itself in the Church, to use the intervention of this extremely favored Mary in guarding the law, purifying the mind, giving an example of virtue, and providing a spiritual sacrifice.

Imitate her, faithful soul. Enter the deep recesses of your heart, so that you will be purified spiritually and washed clean of your sins. God places more value on good will in everything we do than on the deeds themselves; and so, whether we give ourselves to God in the work of contemplation or serve our neighbor by our good deeds, we achieve these things because the love of the Prince urges us on. The acceptable offering of spiritual purification is not accomplished in a man-made temple, but in the recesses of the heart where Jesus freely enters.

Pure and holy virgin, how can I find words to praise your beauty? The highest heavens cannot contain the God you carried in your womb.

You are the most remarkable woman in the world, and you bore such an admirable offspring. The highest heavens cannot contain the God you carried in your womb.

**Prayer**

Dear Father, since you prepared the heart of the Virgin Mary to be a home fit for your Holy Spirit, may we by her prayers become a more appropriate temple of your glory. We make this request through our Master Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.





Sixth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time

*First Reading**Proverbs 1.1-7, 20-33*

Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel.

This is so that people will know wisdom and instruction,  
understand words full of good sense,  
receive training in wise conduct,  
virtue, discernment, and justice;

it is to give good judgment to simple souls,  
and knowledge and discretion to the young.

A wise man listens and grows in learning,  
and an intelligent man looks for wise advice  
in understanding proverbs and enigmas,  
what wise men say, and the riddles they pose.

It is reverence for YHWH that is the beginning of knowledge;  
but fools sneer at wisdom and education.

Wisdom cries out in the street  
and calls in the open plazas;

it shouts at the main crossroads

and sends its message as the city gates open:

“How long are you going to love what does not exist, you fools?

Sneerers take their pleasure in scoffing  
and fools hate knowledge.

Turn back at my warning,

and I will be sure to pour my spirit on you;

I will make you informed of what I say.

Because I called and you refused to listen;

I reached out my hand, and no one paid attention,  
because you all despised my advice,  
and ignored my warning.

Then I will laugh at your downfall,

I will make fun of you in your terror  
when your doom comes like a storm

and your devastation falls on you like a tornado  
 and catastrophe and agony come upon you.  
 The fools will call to me then, but I will not answer;  
 they will search everywhere for me, but will not find me,  
 because they hated knowledge  
 and did not choose to respect YHWH;  
 they would have nothing to do with my good advice  
 and despised all the warnings I gave.  
 And that is why they will eat the fruit they have raised  
 and glut themselves with their own pipe-dreams;  
 it is the self-will of simpletons that kills them  
 and fools' complacency is their ruin;  
 but anyone who listens to me will be safe in his home  
 and have no fear of harm."

Never allow yourself to be self-satisfied; if you pride yourself on your  
 wisdom, you will have to unlearn it before you are really wise; the world's  
 wisdom is stupidity in the eyes of God.

Our proclamation deals with the Prince as crucified, and he is the  
 power of God and the wisdom of God; the world's wisdom is stupidity  
 in the eyes of God.

*Second Reading      A Commentary on the Diatessaron by St. Ephrem*

Master, who can fully understand even one of your words? We lose  
 more than we grasp, like those who drink from a running spring. The  
 reason is that the word God utters has different facets depending on the  
 capacity of the listener, and the Master has portrayed his message in  
 many colors, so that whoever gazes on it can see in it what suits him. He  
 has buried many different sorts of riches within it, so that each of us will  
 grow wealthy as we search them out.

The words God utters are a tree of life that offers us blessed fruit  
 from each of its branches; it is like that rock which was struck open in the  
 desert, from which everyone was offered spiritual drink. As the Emissary  
 says, "They ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink."

And so whenever someone discovers some part of the treasure, he  
 should not think that he has exhausted what God has said; he should feel  
 that this is all of the wealth contained in it that he was able to find. And

he should not say that the utterance is weak and sterile, or look down on it simply because this aspect of it was all that he happened to find; and precisely because he could not capture it all, he should be grateful for its riches.

Be glad, then, that you are overwhelmed, and do not be disheartened because he has overcome you. A thirsty man is happy when he is drinking and is not depressed because he has not drunk the spring dry. Let this spring quench your thirst, and not your thirst the spring; because if you can satisfy your thirst without exhausting the spring, then when you are thirsty again, you can drink from it once more; but if the spring is also dry when your thirst is satisfied, then your victory would be your own damage.

And so be thankful for what you have received, and do not be discouraged at all that such an abundance is still there. What you have received and attained is your present share, and what is left will be your heritage; because you will be able to grasp at another time what you could not take at one time because of your weakness, if only you persevere. So do not try foolishly to drain in one swallow what cannot be consumed all at once, and do not give up out of faintheartedness and miss what you will be able to absorb as time goes on.

The utterance of the Master lasts forever; and this same utterance, the Good News, has been reported to you.

This is the book of the commandments of God, the law that stands for ever; and everyone who keeps it will live. This same utterance, the Good News, has been reported to you.

#### Prayer

Dear God, our Father, since you have promised to remain forever with those who do what is virtuous and moral, please help us live in your presence. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.


*First Reading**Proverbs 3.1-20*

My son, do not forget my law,  
 and see that your heart keeps my commands;  
 they will add to your years and give you long life  
 and will bring you peace.  
 Do not let kindness and faithfulness leave you;  
 tie them around your neck;  
 write them on the tablet of your heart,  
 and in this way you will find honor and a good reputation  
 before God and other men.  
 Trust YHWH with your whole heart,  
 and do not rely on your own intelligence;  
 in everything you do, acknowledge him,  
 and he will make your paths straight.  
 Do not be wise in your own eyes;  
 respect YHWH and turn away from evil,  
 and this will make your body healthy  
 and your bones strong.  
 Do honor to YHWH with your possessions  
 and with the firstfruits of everything you produce  
 so that your barns will fill up with grain  
 and your vats will overflow with your new wine.  
 My son, do not resent YHWH's punishments  
 or hate his corrections,  
 because YHWH corrects those he loves  
 just as a father does when his son delights him.  
 It is a blessing for a man to find wisdom  
 and for a man to attain to understanding,  
 because its rewards are better than the return on silver  
 and it makes more profit than fine gold;  
 it is more precious than rubies  
 and anything you desire cannot be compared with it.  
 It has long life in its right hand,  
 and in its left, riches and honor;

its ways are pleasant paths,  
 and all its roads are peaceful.  
 It is like a tree of life to those that grasp it,  
 and it is a blessing for everyone who keeps it.  
 It is by wisdom that YHWH set up the earth,  
 and he laid out the heavens with intelligence;  
 their depths break open by his knowledge  
 and clouds come and drop the dew.

Do not resent the Master's punishments, and do not hate his corrections, because it is the ones he loves that the Master corrects, just as a father punishes a favorite son.

God is treating you like his sons; is there ever a son that his father does not punish? Because it is the ones he loves that the Master corrects, just as a father punishes a favorite son.

*Second Reading*

*A Sermon by St. Bernard*

Let us work for the food which does not spoil: our rescue. Let us work in the Master's vineyard to earn our daily wage in the wisdom which says, "Those who work in me will not sin." The Prince tells us, "The field is the world." Let us work in it and dig up wisdom, its buried treasure, a treasure we are all looking for and want to acquire.

"If you are looking for it, really search. Turn around and come." Turn around from what? "From your own willfulness." "But," you may say, "if I do not find wisdom in my own will, where will I find it? My soul wants it desperately; and I will not be satisfied when I find it if it is not 'a generous amount, a full measuring-pail, overflowing into my hands.'" You are right, because "it is a blessing for a man to find wisdom and to be full of good judgment."

Look for wisdom while it can still be found. Call for it while it is near. Do you want to know how near it is? "The words you are looking for are in your heart and on your lips," provided that you make an honest search. To the extent that you find wisdom in your heart, good judgment will flow from your lips; but be careful that it flows from them but not *away* from them, or that you do not throw it up.

If you have found wisdom, you have found honey. But do not eat so much that you become too full and bring it all up. Eat so that you are

always hungry. Wisdom says, “Those who eat me continue to feel hunger.” Do not think you have too much of it, but do not eat too much or you will throw it up. If you do, what you seem to have eaten will be taken away from you, because you gave up searching too soon. While wisdom is near and while it can be found, search for it and ask for its help. Solomon says, “A man who eats too much honey does himself no good; and a man who looks for fame for himself will be crushed by that same renown.”

“It is a blessing for a man to find wisdom.” It is even more of a blessing to be a “man who lives in wisdom,” because he is aware of its abundance. There are three ways for wisdom or good judgment to be plentiful in you: if you admit your sins, if you show gratitude and praise, and if your speech is constructive. “A man who believes with his heart and soul is virtuous; he acknowledges reality with his lips, and so is saved. “At the outset of his speaking, the virtuous man is his own accuser;” next he praises God, and thirdly, if his wisdom extends that far, he benefits his neighbor.

I have loved wisdom more than health or beauty, and I preferred it to the light of day; everything good came to me along with it.

From my youth, I have loved wisdom and searched for it, and I came to love its beauty; everything good came to me along with it.

#### Prayer

Dear God, our Father, since you have promised to remain forever with those who do what is virtuous and moral, please help us to live in your presence. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### *First Reading*

Is wisdom not calling

*Proverbs 8.1-5, 12-36*



and understanding making itself heard?  
It is standing there on the top of the high hill  
and at the crossroads,  
coming out of the gates that give entry to the city  
and at the doors of houses:  
“I am calling to you human beings,  
and my voice is to be heard by mortal men!  
You naive fools, learn common sense!  
You half-wits, find an understanding heart!  
I, wisdom, share my home with good judgment  
and discover knowledge and prudence.  
Respect for YHWH is to hate evil;  
and I hate pride, arrogance, and immoral conduct  
as well as perverse speech.  
I give good advice, and healthy guidance;  
I am intelligence, and strength belongs to me.  
Kings use me to rule,  
and rulers make their decisions by me;  
heads of state and nobles rule by me,  
and all the judges through the earth.  
I love those who love me,  
and those who make a serious search for me will find me.  
Riches and honor come with me:  
lasting riches, and virtue.  
My yield is better than gold, even refined gold,  
and my profit is greater than silver.  
I walk along the path of virtue  
among the roads of morality,  
so that I will grant wealth to those who love me  
and fill their treasure-chests.  
I belonged to YHWH at the beginning of his actions,  
before any of his ancient works were made;  
I was created from eternity,  
from the beginning, before there ever was an earth;  
when there was no chaos, I emerged,  
when there were no springs full of water,  
before the mountains were set in place,

and before the hills, I came to be;  
 while he had not yet made the earth or its fields,  
 or even the primal dust of the universe.  
 I was there when he readied the heavens,  
 when he drew a circle on the face of the depths,  
 when he placed the clouds up in it  
 and made the solid dome for the heavenly water,  
 when he assigned the limit for the sea  
 so that its water would not violate his command,  
 when he laid the foundations of the earth,  
 I was beside him as his engineer,  
 and I was his delight every day,  
 playing beside him at every moment,  
 taking pleasure in the living world  
 and finding joy in mortal men.  
 And so now, listen to me, my children,  
 because it is your blessing to keep my ways;  
 pay attention to my teaching, and be wise,  
 and do not sneer at it.  
 It is a blessing for a man to listen to me  
 watching for me every day at my gates,  
 waiting at the threshold of my doors,  
 because anyone who finds me, finds life  
 and gains favor with YHWH;  
 but whoever sins against me harms his own soul,  
 and those who hate me love death.”

In the beginning, before he made the earth, the Master created me.

In the beginning, there was the Word, and the Word was face to face with God, and the Word was God. The Master created me.

*Second reading      Discourses against the Arians by St. Athanasius*

The only Son God ever fathered, the Wisdom of God, created the entire universe. Scripture says, “You have made everything by your wisdom, and the earth is full of your creatures.” But it was not enough simply to be; God wanted his creatures also to be good; and that is why he was pleased that his own wisdom would come down to their level and

impress on each of them singly and all together a kind of resemblance to their Model. It would then be obvious that God's creatures shared in his wisdom and that his works were worthy of him.

That is, just as the word we utter is an image of the Word who is God's Son, the wisdom implanted in us is an image of the Wisdom of God's Son. It gives us the ability to know and understand, and so makes us capable of receiving the one who is the all-creative Wisdom, through whom we also come to know the Father. "Whoever possesses the Son also possesses the Father," says Scripture, and "whoever accepts me accepts the One who sent me." And so, since this image of the Wisdom of God has been produced in us and in every creature, the true and creative Wisdom properly attributes to himself what applies to his creatures and says, "The Master created me in his works."

But because "the world was not wise enough to recognize God in his wisdom," as we have explained, "God decided to save those who believe by the 'stupid' message that we preach." Not wishing to be known any longer, as in earlier times, through the mere image and shadow of his Wisdom existing in creatures, he caused the true Wisdom himself to take on flesh, to become a human being, and to suffer death on the cross so that everyone who believes in him would be saved by that faith.

Yet this was the same Wisdom of God who had in the beginning revealed himself and his Father through himself by means of his image in creatures (which is why Wisdom, too, is said to be created). Later, as John reports, that Wisdom, which is also the Word, became flesh, and after destroying the power of death and saving our race, he revealed himself and his Father through himself more clearly. "Please grant," he prayed, "that they will know you, the only true God, and Prince Jesus as the one you sent."

So now the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of God, since it is one and the same thing to know the Father through the Son, and to know the Son who comes from the Father. The Father takes pleasure from his Son, and with the same joy, the Son delights in the Father and says, "I was his joy; every day I took delight in his presence."


Since you have received Prince Jesus as Master, live your life in union with him, because the totality of divinity lives in him in bodily form.

You have only one teacher, the Prince, because the totality of divinity

lives in him in bodily form.

*Prayer*

Dear God, our Father, since you have promised to remain forever with those who do what is virtuous and moral, please help us to live in your presence. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

ednesday

*First Reading*

*Proverbs 9.1-18*

Wisdom has built its house,  
 set up her seven pillars,  
 slaughtered her meat,  
 mixed her wine,  
 and set her table  
 and sent out her maidservants;  
 she is calling from the heights over the city,  
 “Any uninformed person should turn in here!”  
 And she says to the ignorant,  
 “Come, eat my bread  
 and drink the wine I have mixed;  
 abandon foolishness and live  
 and walk on the intelligent path!”  
 A person who corrects a sarcastic man only earns embarrassment,  
 and one who reprimands a sinner hurts himself;  
 do not correct the arrogant, or they will hate you,  
 reprimand wise men, and they will love you.  
 Tell a wise man what to do, and he will be wiser still,  
 teach a virtuous man, and he advances in learning.  
 Respect for YHWH is the beginning of wisdom,  
 and knowledge of the one who is holy is understanding;  
 because it is by me that your life will be prolonged,

and you will add extra years to your existence.  
 If you are wise, your wisdom benefits you,  
 and if you sneer at everything, you bear everything alone.  
 Stupidity is a raucous woman,  
 an idiot who knows nothing.  
 She sits at her house door  
 on a seat looking over the city's heights,  
 and calls on passersby,  
 "Any uninformed person should turn in here!"  
 And she says to the ignorant,  
 "Stolen water is sweet,  
 and bread got by stealth tastes fine!"  
 But they do not know that inside are corpses  
 and that her guests are in the world beneath the earth.

A man once prepared a great banquet and sent all his servants to tell the guests, "Come, everything is ready."

Come, eat my bread and drink the wine I have mixed for you. Come, everything is ready.

*Second Reading*      *Commentary on Proverbs by Procopius of Gaza*

"Wisdom built itself a house." God the Father's Power, who is a person himself, has built as his residence the whole world in which he lives by his activity, and also man who, since he was created in God's own image and likeness, has a nature which is partly visible and partly hidden from our eyes.

"And it has set up seven pillars." Wisdom gave the seven gifts on the Spirit to human beings who were made in the Prince's image to enable them to believe in the Prince and keep his commandments. A spiritual man grows by these gifts and develops until he finally reaches maturity through firm faith and the supernatural graces he receives. Knowledge stimulates virtue and virtue reflects knowledge; respect for the Master, understanding, and knowledge give the true orientation to his natural wisdom. Power makes him eager to search for understanding of the will of God as revealed in the laws by which the whole of creation is governed. Good advice distinguishes these very sacred and eternal laws of God from anything opposed to them, because these laws are meant for

human beings to ponder, to promulgate, and to fulfill. Insight makes a man ready to embrace these expressions of God's will and to reject whatever contradicts them.

"It has mixed the wine in a bowl and set the table." Because the Word of God has mixed in human beings, as if they were bowls, a spiritual and material nature, and has given them a knowledge both of creation and himself as Creator, it is natural for what belongs to God to have the effect of wine on human minds. The Prince, the bread from heaven, is himself their nourishment which enables them to grow in virtue, and it is the Prince who quenches their thirst and gives them satisfaction from his teaching. He has prepared this rich banquet and spiritual feast for everyone who wants to share in it.

"It has sent out its maidservants with the sublime message that everyone is to come to drink from the bowl." The Prince has sent his Emissaries, the servants of his divine will, to deliver the message of the Good News, which, since it is spiritual, transcends both the natural and the written law. And he calls us by this to himself, in whom, as in a bowl, there was achieved a miraculous mixing of divine and human natures, while each still remains distinct. And he calls out through the Emissaries, "Is anyone uninformed? Turn to me." If anyone is so uninformed as to think in his heart that there is no God, he should renounce his disbelief and turn to me by faith; he is to know that I am the maker of everything and its Master.

And he says to those who have no wisdom, "Come, eat my bread and drink the wine I have prepared for you." He says to those who still have none of the deeds of faith and the higher knowledge that inspires them, "Come, eat my body, the bread that is nourishment for virtue, and drink my blood, the wine that cheers you with the joy of true knowledge and makes you divine, because in a miraculous way, I have mixed my divinity with my blood for your rescue."

Wisdom has built itself a house and set up seven pillars; it has prepared its wine and set its table.

Anyone who eats the meat of my body and drinks my blood lives in me and I in him, says the Master. It has prepared its wine and set its table.

## Prayer

Dear God, our Father, since you have promised to remain forever with those who do what is virtuous and moral, please help us to live in your presence. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.


 THURSDAY
*First Reading**Proverbs 10.6-32*

Blessings fall on virtuous heads,  
 but a slap stops a vicious mouth.  
 A virtuous man's memory receives blessings,  
 while a vicious man's name will rot.  
 A wise man listens to what he is commanded;  
 it is blustering fools who trip.  
 If a man conducts himself with integrity, he is secure,  
 while those who take devious paths will be found out.  
 A person who closes his eyes to trouble causes it,  
 but a person who reprimands frankly promotes peace.  
 A virtuous man's mouth is a spring of life,  
 but the mouth of immoral people has lips of violence.  
 Hatred foments conflict  
 while love covers over every sin.  
 Wisdom is found on intelligent lips,  
 but a switch goes on a stupid back.  
 The wise store up knowledge,  
 while the mouths of fools bring on their ruin.  
 A rich man's wealth is his fortified city,  
 while what ruins the poor is their poverty.  
 Virtuous labor leads to life,  
 and what immoral people earn is sin.  
 To listen to lessons is the path to life,  
 while to refuse correction is to wander aimlessly.  
 A person who hides his hatred has lips that lie,  
 and anyone who spreads gossip is a fool.

An abundance of words is not without sin,  
 and one who curbs his lips is wise.  
 A virtuous tongue is refined silver;  
 an immoral heart is not worth much.  
 Virtuous lips nourish many people,  
 while fools die out from their stupidity.  
 YHWH's blessing makes a man rich  
 and he adds no suffering to it.  
 Immorality is a fool's game;  
 it is an intelligent man who has wisdom.  
 The fears of evil people will be realized,  
 while the desire of the virtuous will be granted.  
 When the tornado passes, immoral people are gone,  
 but the foundation of virtue stands firm forever.  
 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke in the eyes  
 is a lazy man to those sending him on errands.  
 Respect for YHWH prolongs life,  
 but vice shortens one's years.  
 The hope of the virtuous gives them joy,  
 while vicious ambitions come to nothing.  
 YHWH's ways are honest men's strength,  
 and ruin comes to those who cheat.  
 Virtuous people will never be disturbed,  
 but evil people will not find homes on earth.  
 A virtuous mouth gives birth to wisdom,  
 while a perverse tongue will be cut out.  
 Virtuous lips know how to please,  
 and immoral mouths, how to pervert.

A virtuous mouth gives birth to wisdom, and its tongue says what is  
 right; God's law is in the man's heart.  
 A virtuous man will be remembered forever; he will have no fear of  
 bad news; God's law is in the man's heart.

*Second Reading**Explanations of the Psalms by St. Ambrose*

We must always meditate on God's wisdom, and keep it in our hearts  
 and on our lips. Our tongues must speak virtue, and the Law of God



must be in our hearts. Scripture tells us, “You are to speak of these commandments when you are seated in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you rise.” So let us speak of Master Jesus, because he is wisdom, he is the word, in fact the Word of God.

It is also written, “Open your lips, and let God’s word be heard.” God’s word is uttered by those who repeat the teachings of the Prince and meditate on his sayings. We should speak this word. When we speak about wisdom, we are speaking of the Prince; when we speak of virtue, we are speaking of the Prince; when we speak of peace, we are speaking of the Prince, and when we speak of truth and life and redemption, we are speaking of the Prince.

“Open your lips,” says Scripture, “and let God’s word be heard.” It is for you to open them, and it is for him to be heard. Similarly, David said, “I will listen to what the Master says in me.” The very Son of God says, “Open your lips, and I will fill them.” Not everyone can reach the perfection of wisdom as Solomon or Daniel did, but the spirit of wisdom is poured onto everyone in relation to capacity—that is, on all the faithful; if you believe, you have the spirit of wisdom.

And so meditate at all times on what deals with God, and speak of what deals with God “when you are seated in your house.” By “house” we can understand the Church, or the hidden place within us, so that we are to speak within ourselves. Speak with good judgment, so that you will not fall into sin by excess talking. “When you are seated in your house” speak to yourself as if you were talking to a judge. “When you speak along the road,” speak in such a way as never to be idle. You speak “along the road” if you speak in the Prince, because the Prince is the way. When you walk along this way, speak to yourself, and speak to the Prince. Hear him say to you, “I desire to have people pray in every place, and lift holy hands without anger or quarreling.” When you lie down, speak so that the sleep of death will not steal in on you. Listen and learn how you are to speak as you lie down: “I will not give sleep to my eyes or let my eyelids doze off until I find a place for the Master, a home for the God of Jacob.”

When you get up or rise again, speak of the Prince, so as to fulfill what you are commanded. Listen and learn how the Prince is to wake you from sleep: your soul says, “I hear my brother knocking at the

door.” Then the Prince says to you, “Open the door for me, my sister, my wife.” Listen and learn how you are to waken the Prince: Your soul says, “I beg you, daughters of Jerusalem, waken or reawaken the love of my heart.” The Prince is that love.

God has given us Jesus the Prince to be our wisdom, our strength, our holiness, and our redemption; this is why Scripture tells us: “If you want to brag, brag about the Master.”

We have all received some of what in him is complete; we have received as gifts what belongs to him by right. This is why Scripture tells us, “If you want to brag, brag about the Master.”

#### Prayer

Dear God, our Father, since you have promised to remain forever with those who do what is virtuous and moral, please help us live in your presence. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



*First Reading*      *Proverbs 15.8-9, 16-17, 25-26, 29, 33, 16.1-9, 17.5*

A sacrifice from an immoral man is disgusting to YHWH,

but prayer from an honest man is his delight.

Immoral conduct is disgusting to YHWH,

but he loves people who follow virtue.

A little possessed with respect for YHWH

is better than great wealth with anxiety.

A dinner with nothing but vegetables and love

is better than a fattened calf with hatred.

YHWH will destroy the proud man's house,

but keep the widow's territory intact.

What immoral people think is disgusting to YHWH,

but what pure people say he finds pleasant.

YHWH keeps himself aloof from immoral people

but listens to virtuous people's prayers.  
 Respect for YHWH is training in wisdom,  
 and self-effacement goes before honor.  
 Plans in the heart belong to men,  
 but what the tongue says belongs to YHWH.  
 Everything a man does is pure in his own eyes,  
 but YHWH weighs his spirit.  
 Entrust what you do to YHWH  
 and your plans will succeed.  
 YHWH made everything for himself,  
 and he even made the immoral for the day of doom.  
 Everyone whose heart is proud is disgusting to YHWH;  
 all of them together will not escape punishment.  
 It is by mercy and fidelity  
 that evil deeds are atoned,  
 and a person leaves sin by respecting YHWH.  
 When a person's conduct pleases YHWH  
 he makes even his enemies be at peace with him.  
 A little with virtue  
 is better than vast wealth without honesty.  
 A man's mind plans his conduct,  
 but YHWH directs his steps.

Never forget the Master, who led you out of Egypt; you are to respect the Master, your God, and be a slave only to him.

Respect for the Master is training in wisdom, and humility is the path to honor. You are to respect the Master, your God, and be a slave only to him.

*Second Reading      Treatises on the First Letter of John by St. Augustine*

We have been promised that "we will be like him because we will see him as he is." By these words, the tongue has done its best; now we must apply meditation in our hearts. Though they are the words of St. John, what are they in comparison with the divine reality? And how can we, so far below John in what we deserve, add anything of our own? Yet we have received, as John told us, an anointing by the Holy One, which teaches us within ourselves more than our tongue can speak. So let us

turn to this source of knowledge, and because at present we cannot see, make it our business to desire the divine vision.

The entire life of a good Christian is in fact an exercise of holy desire. You do not see what you long for, but the very act of desiring makes you ready, so that when he comes you will see and be completely satisfied.

Suppose you are going to fill some receptacle or container, and you know you will be given a large amount. You begin stretching the sack or wineskin or whatever it is. Why? Because you know how much you will have to put in it, and your eyes tell you there is not enough room. And so by stretching it, you increase the volume of the sack, and this is how God deals with us; simply by making us wait, he increases our desire, which in turn enlarges the capacity of our soul, making it able to receive what is to be given to us.

And so, brothers and sisters, let us go on desiring, because we will be filled. Notice St. Paul stretching, so to speak, his ability to receive what is to come: "It is not that I have already attained it," he said, "or am perfect. My brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have already attained it." We could ask him, "If you have not attained it, what are you doing in this life?" And Paul answers, "I do this one thing: I forget what is there behind me and stretch forward to what lies ahead, and hurry on toward the prize I am called to in the life above." Not only did Paul say he stretched forward, but he added that he hurried on toward a chosen goal. He realized that in fact he was still short of receiving "what no eye has seen or ear heard, what has not entered man's mind to conceive."

This is our Christian life. By desiring heaven we exercise the powers of the soul. But this exercise will only be effective to the extent that we free ourselves from desires leading to infatuation with this world. Let me return to the example I already used, that of filling an empty container. God means to fill each of you with what is good—so dump out what is bad. If he wishes to fill you with honey and you are full of vinegar, where is the honey to go? The container has to be emptied of its contents and then washed. Yes, it must be washed clean even if you have to work hard and scour it; it must be made fit for the new thing, whatever it is.

We could go on speaking analogously of honey, gold, or wine, but whatever we say cannot express the reality we are to receive. The name of that reality is God. But can anyone claim that in that one syllable we utter the full expanse of our heart's desire? And so, whatever we say is

necessarily less than the full truth; we must stretch ourselves toward the standard of the Prince, so that when he comes he will be able to fill us with his presence. “Then we will be like him, because we will see him as he is.”

Find your pleasure in the Master, and he will give you your heart’s desire.  
Commit your life to the Master and trust in him, and he will give you your heart’s desire.

### Prayer

Dear God, our Father, since you have promised to remain forever with those who do what is virtuous and moral, please help us to live in your presence. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



### First Reading

*Proverbs 31.10-31*

Can anyone find a virtuous wife?  
Her value is far beyond rubies.  
Her husband safely trusts his heart to her,  
and he will have nothing but benefit from it.  
She does him good, not harm  
every day of her life.  
She finds wool and flax  
and does not mind working with her hands.  
She is like merchant ships,  
bringing food from far-off places;  
she rises while it is still night  
and provides food for her family,  
seeing to it that the servants receive their share.  
She examines a field and buys it,  
and from her earnings, plants a vineyard.

She puts on the belt of strength  
and develops her arms.  
She sees to it that what she produces is good,  
and has her lamp lit at night.  
She puts her hand to the distaff  
with her fingers twirling the spindle.  
She holds out her hands to the poor  
and extends a hand to the destitute.  
She has no fear of snow for her family,  
because all of them are dressed in warm clothes.  
She makes her own coverlets;  
and her clothing is fine linen and velvet.  
Her husband is prominent at the city gates,  
where he sits with the elders of the land.  
She makes linen clothes, which she sells,  
and supplies belts for the merchants.  
She dresses herself in strength and dignity,  
and will find her joy in times to come.  
She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
and kindly advice comes from her tongue.  
She watches over what her household does  
and does not sit back and do nothing but eat.  
Her children come forward to admire her,  
and her husband sings her praises:  
“Many girls have done well,  
but you are better than all of them.”  
Charm is deceitful, and beauty does not last;  
it is a woman who respects YHWH who wins praise.  
Give her everything she deserves,  
and let what she does be what is praised in the city gates.

She sat down to work with courage and put out all her strength; and so  
her lamp will never go out.

The Master will help her at dawn; his loving presence will be with  
her. He has his home in her, and she will not waver; and so her lamp will  
never go out.

*Second Reading**The Pastoral Constitution on the Church  
in the Modern World by the Second Vatican Council*

Husband and wife, by the marriage compact, are no longer two; they are one physical thing. By their intimate union of persons and of actions, they give mutual help and service to each other, experience the meaning of their unity, and gain an ever deeper understanding of it day by day.

This intimate union in the mutual self-giving of two persons, as well as the good of the children, demands full fidelity from both, and an indissoluble unity between them.

The Prince, the Master, has abundantly blessed this richly complex love, which springs from the divine source of love and is founded on the model of his union with the Church.

In earlier times, God met his people in a Treaty of love and fidelity. So now the Savior of mankind, the Bridegroom of the Church, meets Christian husbands and wives in the sacrament of matrimony. Further, he remains with them so that, just as he loved the Church and gave himself up for her, husband and wife will, in mutual self-giving, love each other with perpetual fidelity.

True married love is caught up into God's love; it is guided and enriched by the redeeming power of the Prince and the saving action of the Church, so that the partners will be effectively led to God, and receive help and strength in the sublime responsibility of parenthood.

Christian partners are therefore strengthened, and, so to speak, consecrated, by a special sacrament for the duties and the dignity of their state. By the power of this sacrament, they fulfill their obligations to each other and to their family, and are filled with the spirit of the Prince. This spirit pervades their whole lives with faith, hope, and love, and thus they promote their own perfection and each other's sanctification, and so contribute together to the greater glory of God.

Hence, with parents leading the way by example and family prayer, their children—in fact, everyone within the family circle—will find it easier to make progress in natural virtues, in salvation, and in holiness. Husband and wife, raised to the dignity and the responsibility of parenthood, will be zealous in fulfilling their task as educators, especially in the sphere of religious education, a task that is primarily their own.

Children, as active members of the family, contribute in their own way to the holiness of their parents. With the love of grateful hearts, with

loving respect and trust, they will return the generosity of their parents, and will stand by them as true sons and daughters when their parents meet with hardship and the loneliness of old age.

This is a great mystery, but I am saying it of the Prince and of his Church; the Prince loved the Church and gave himself up for her.

A man must love his wife as he loves himself, and a woman must respect her husband; the Prince loved the Church and gave himself up for her.

#### Prayer

Dear God, our Father, since you have promised to remain forever with those who do what is virtuous and right, please help us to live in your presence. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



Seventh Sunday  
in ORDINARY Time

*First Reading*

*Qoheleth 1.1-18*

Words of David's son Qoheleth,  
King in Jerusalem:  
Futility! Complete futility! says Qoheleth;  
Futility! Complete futility! Everything is futile!  
What good does all a man's labor do him  
as he sweats at it under the sun?  
One generation goes, another comes  
and the earth stays the same forever.  
The sun, too, rises and the sun sets  
and goes back to the place where it rises.  
The wind blows south  
and turns around to the north;  
the wind turns this way and that constantly,  
and comes back round on itself.  
All the rivers run down to the sea,  
but the sea never fills up;  
the rivers go back again  
to the place they came from.  
Everything is full of drudgery;  
no man can speak of all of it.  
Eyes are not sated with their seeing,  
and ears do not fill up with hearing.  
What has happened is what will happen;  
what is done is what will be done,  
and there is nothing new under the sun.

Is there anything where it can be said, "Look! This is new!"?  
 It has already happened in the ancient times before us.  
 There is no recollection of the past,  
 and there will be no remembrance of the future  
 by the ones who come after it.

I, Qoheleth, was King over Israel in Jerusalem; and I determined to examine and search out with wisdom everything that happens under the sun: this wearisome task God has given mortal men for their exercise. I have seen everything that has been done under the sun, and in fact it is all a futile attempt to grasp hold of the wind.

What is crooked cannot be straightened,  
 and what is missing cannot be replaced.

I pondered this in my heart, and said, "I have now reached greatness and achieved more wisdom than everyone before me in Jerusalem; my heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge." And I applied myself to know wisdom and to know madness and foolishness. And I realized that this is also an attempt grasp hold of the wind, because there is a great deal of suffering in wisdom,  
 and a person who gains knowledge gains grief.

I have seen everything that happens beneath the sun, and that it is all a futile attempt to grasp hold of the wind. Just as a man comes naked out of his mother's womb, he will go away naked in the end; there is nothing he can take with him.

We brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can take nothing with us when we go. Just as a man comes naked from his mother's womb, he will go away naked in the end; there is nothing he can take with him.

*Second Reading      Chapters on Charity by St. Maximus the Confessor*

Charity is an attitude of mind which prefers nothing to the knowledge of God. If a man possesses any strong attachment to what is on this earth, he cannot possess true charity. That is, anyone who really loves God would rather know and love God than his creatures; the whole set and longing of his mind is always directed toward him.

And that is because God is far superior to all his creation, since everything which exists has been made by God and for him; and so, in deserting God, who is beyond compare, for the inferior works of

creation, a man shows that he values God, the source of creation, less than creation itself.

The Master reminds us himself, "Whoever loves me will keep my commandments. And this is my commandment: for you to love each other." So a man who does not love his neighbor is not obeying God's command, and one who does not obey his command cannot love God. It is a blessing for a man to love all other human beings equally; but if he really loves God, he must love his neighbors absolutely. This kind of man cannot hoard wealth; instead, like God himself, he gives generously from his own resources to each person as his needs warrant.

And since he imitates God's generosity, the only distinction he draws is the person's need; he does not distinguish between a good man and a bad one, a virtuous man and a vicious one. But his own will's goodness makes him prefer the man who is trying to be virtuous over the one who is depraved.

A charitable mind is not displayed simply in giving money; it is shown even more by personal service as well as by the communication of what God says to others. In fact, if a man's service toward his brothers is genuine, and if he really renounces worldly concerns, he is freed from selfish desires, because he now shares in God's own knowledge and love. Since he does possess God's love, he does not experience weariness as he follows the Master, his God; instead, following the prophet Jeremiah, he withstands every type of reprimand and hardship without even harboring an evil thought against anyone.


That is, Jeremiah warns us, "We are the Master's Temple." And you should not be saying, "Mere faith in our Master Prince Jesus can save me." By itself faith accomplishes nothing; because even the devils believe and are terrified. No, faith must be joined to an active love of God which is expressed in good deeds. A charitable man is distinguished by sincere and patient service to his fellow men; it also means using things correctly.

I am giving you a new commandment: you are to have the same love for each other as I have for you. Anyone who loves his brother lives in the light.

We can be sure that we know the Prince only if we keep his commandments. Anyone who loves his brother lives in the light.

## Prayer

Dear Father, please keep before us the wisdom and love you have revealed in your Son, and help us to be like him in what we say and do. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.


*First Reading**Qoheleth 2.1-3, 12-26*

I said to myself, “Come now, I will experiment with pleasure; and so enjoy what you like.” But in fact, this was also futility. I called laughter insanity, and said of pleasure, “What is it good for?” I searched out ways of satisfying my body with wine while I guided my mind with wisdom, and I took up foolishness to see what was good for mortal men to do under heaven during the time they lived.

I went on to consider wisdom, insanity, and foolishness;

and then I saw that wisdom is as much greater than foolishness  
as light is than darkness;

a wise man has eyes in his head,

while a fool walks around in darkness.

Yet I noticed myself

that the same fate happens to all of them,

So I told myself,

“What happens to fools

happens to me,

So how was I wiser?”

Then I told myself,

“This is futile also.”

There is no more remembrance of a wise man

than of a fool as time goes on,

since everything that now exists will be forgotten in the future;

and how does a wise man die?

Like a fool.

And so I hated my live, because what I did under the sun was painful to

me, because everything is a futile attempt to catch the wind.

And then I hated the work I toiled at under the sun, because I had to leave its return to the man who is to come after me; and who knows whether he is wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all the work I labored at and revealed my wisdom under the sun. This is more futility.

So I became depressed and despaired of all the labor I had worked at under the sun, because here we have a man whose labor is wisely done, and done with knowledge and skill; and yet he must leave his property to someone else who has not worked for it. This is more futility, and a terrible wrong. What does a man have to show for all his work and for his worry and his effort exerted under the sun? All his days are painful, and his work is a burden, and even in the night his heart finds no rest. This is also futile.

There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink, and for his soul to enjoy good results from his work; and I also saw that this was from the hand of God. That is, can anyone eat and enjoy himself more than I? God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man is good in his sight; but he gives sinners the work of amassing and collecting things, for him to give to whoever God sees fit. This is more futility, and an attempt to grasp the wind.

God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to the one who pleases him; but to the sinner he gives a weary heart and a foolish eagerness to amass riches. This is futility, and an attempt to grasp the wind.

The love of money is the root of everything bad, and some men in their greed have brought on themselves a great deal of bitter suffering. This is futility and an attempt to grasp the wind.

*Second Reading*      *A Homily on Qobeleth by St. Gregory of Nyssa*

We will be blessed with clear vision if we keep our eyes fixed on the Prince, because, as Paul teaches, he is our head, and has no shadow of evil in him. St. Paul himself and everyone who has reached the same level of sanctity had their eyes on the Prince, and so has everyone who lives and moves and has his being in him.

Since no darkness can be seen by anyone surrounded by light, no trivialities can capture the attention of anyone who has his eyes on the Prince. The one who keeps his eyes on the head and source of the whole

universe has them on virtue in all its perfection; he has them on truth, on honesty, on immortality, and on everything else that is good, because the Prince is goodness itself.

“A wise man, then, turns his eyes toward the One who is his head, but a fool gropes about in darkness.” No one who puts his lamp under a bed instead of on a lampstand will receive any light from it. People are often considered blind and useless when they make the supreme Good their goal and devote themselves to contemplation of God; but Paul took pride in this and declared himself a fool for the Prince’s sake. The reason he said “We are fools for the Prince’s sake” was that his mind was free from all earthly preoccupations. It was as though he said, “We are blind to the life here below because our eyes are raised toward the One who is our head.”

And so, without board or lodging, he traveled from place to place, destitute, naked, and exhausted by hunger and thirst. When people saw him in captivity, or whipped, or shipwrecked, or led about in chains, they could hardly help thinking him a miserable sight. Still, even while he suffered all this at men’s hands he always looked toward the One who was his head, and asked, “What can separate us from the Prince’s love, which is in Jesus? Suffering? Pain? Persecution? Hunger? Nakedness? Danger? Death?” In other words, “What can force me to take my eyes from the one who is my head and turn them toward what is contemptible?”

He asks us to follow his example: “Search for what is above,” which is only another way of saying, “Keep your eyes on the Prince.”

Just as the eyes of slaves are on their masters, our eyes are fixed on the Master, our God, as we wait for him to have mercy on us.

I am the light of the world. No one who follows me will ever walk in darkness; he will have the light of life. Our eyes are fixed on the Master, our God, as we wait for him to have mercy on us.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, please keep before us the wisdom and love you have revealed in your Son, and help us to be like him in what we say and do, since he is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.


*First Reading**Qoheleth 3.1-22*

There is an occasion for everything,  
and a time for every purpose under heaven:

A time to be born,  
and a time to die;  
a time to plant,  
and a time to reap what was planted;  
a time to kill,  
and a time to heal;  
a time to tear down,  
and a time to build;  
a time to weep  
and a time to laugh;  
a time to grieve  
and a time to dance;  
a time to throw stones away  
and a time to collect stones;  
a time to embrace  
and a time to keep from embracing;  
a time to gain  
and a time to lose;  
a time to preserve  
and a time to discard;  
a time to rip  
and a time to sew;  
a time to be quiet  
and a time to speak;  
a time to love  
and a time to hate;  
a time for war  
and a time for peace.

What benefit does a laborer receive from his labor? I have seen the God-given tasks which men are to busy themselves with. He made everything

appropriate for its time; but he has put eternity into their hearts, even though men cannot discover what God has done from beginning to end.

I know nothing better for human beings than to enjoy themselves, and to do good in their lives; also that human beings should eat and drink and enjoy the benefits of his work; this is God's gift.

I know that, whatever God does,

it will last forever.

Nothing can add to it,

and nothing be removed from it.

God does it for human beings to show him reverence.

Whatever exists has already existed,

and whatever will exist has already existed;

and God restores what has gone by.

I also saw this under the sun:

Instead of good judgment,

there was evil;

Instead of virtue,

there was vice.

I said in my heart,

God will be judge over the virtuous and the vicious,

because there is a time there for every goal and every deed.

I said in my heart, "As to the way men are, God gives them troubles, so that they will see that they are themselves like animals." What happens to human beings also happens to animals; the same thing occurs in them; one dies in the same way as the other. They all obviously have the same breath, the same spirit, and humans have no advantage over animals, since everything is futile. Everyone goes to the same place; everything comes from dirt and everything goes back to dirt. Who knows if the spirit in human beings goes up and animals' spirits go down?

So I saw that there was nothing better for a man than to enjoy what he has done, because that is his heritage—because who can enable him to see what will happen after him?

The time is growing short, and those who have to deal with the world should not become absorbed in it, because the world as we know it is going to cease to exist.

There is an occasion for everything and a time for every purpose



under the sun, because the world as we know it is going to cease to exist.

*Second reading*      *A Homily on Qobeleth by St. Gregory of Nyssa*

“There is a time to be born and a time to die.” The fact that there is a natural link between birth and death is expressed very clearly in this text of Scripture. Death invariably follows birth, and everyone who is born finally comes to the grave.

“There is a time to be born and a time to die.” God grant that my birth and my death will be at the right time! Of course, no one imagines that the speaker regards as acts of natural virtue our physical birth and death, neither of which our own will plays any part in. A woman does not give birth because she chooses to do so; and no one dies as a result of his own decision. Obviously, there is neither virtue nor vice in anything that is beyond our control, so we must consider what is meant by a birth and death that are at the right time.

It seems to me that the birth referred to here is our rescue, as is suggested by the prophet Isaiah. This reaches its full term and is not stillborn when, after it is conceived by reverence for God, the soul’s own labor pains bring it to the light of day. We are in a sense our own parents, and we give birth to ourselves by our own free choice of what is good. This kind of choice becomes possible for us when we have taken God into ourselves and become children of God, children of the Supreme Being. On the other hand, if what the Emissary calls “the form of the Prince” has not been produced in us, we abort ourselves. The man of God must reach maturity.

Now if the meaning of a birth “at the right time” is clear, the meaning of a timely death is also. For St. Paul, every moment was a time to die, as he declares in his letters: “I swear by the pride I take in you that I face death every day.” Elsewhere, he says, “For your sake we are being assassinated daily” and “we feel like people condemned to death.” How Paul died every day is perfectly obvious; he never gave himself up to a sinful life, and kept his body under constant control. He carried death with him—the Prince’s death—wherever he went. He was always being crucified with the Prince; it was not his own life he lived; it was the Prince who lived in him. This certainly was a timely death, a death whose end was true life.

“I put to death and I give life,” God says, teaching us that death to


sin and life in the Spirit is his gift, and promising that whatever he kills he will restore to life again.

I alone bring both death and life; I alone wound and heal. No one can escape my grasp.

I hold the keys of death and the land of the dead. No one can escape my grasp.

*Prayer*

Dear Father, please keep before us the wisdom and love you have revealed in your Son, and help us be like him in what we say and do, because he is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

 Wednesday

*First Reading*

*Qoheleth 5.10-6.8*

A man who loves money will not be satisfied with money,  
and one who loves wealth with more wealth.  
This too is futility.

When possessions increase,  
the ones who consume them increase;  
so what good does this do their owners  
except to feast their eyes on them?

A working man's sleep is pleasant  
whether he eats little or a great deal;  
but a rich man's abundance will not let him sleep.

There is a serious harm I have seen under the sun:  
riches kept to the detriment of the owner.

When he loses the wealth because of reverses,  
and he fathers a son, there is nothing in his hand.

A man will return naked, just as he came from his mother's womb;  
he will go the way he came  
and will take nothing from his labor  
to carry away with him in his hands.

And this is also a terrible wrong,  
to leave just exactly as one came,  
and what good did it do him to labor under the sun?  
He eats in darkness every day of his life,  
and has a great deal of suffering, sickness, and anger.

Here is what I have seen: It is good and proper for a man to eat and drink and enjoy the benefit of all the work he toils at under the sun every day of his life that God gives him; this is his heritage. And even for the man God has given riches and wealth to and power to consume it, the gift of God is to accept his heritage and enjoy his work; because he will not pay attention to how short his life is, because God keeps him busy enjoying himself.

There is something bad I have seen under the sun which is common with people: a man God has given riches and property and honor, so that he has all that he could desire, and yet God has not given him the power to consume it, and a stranger eats it up. This is futility and a serious wrong.

If a man fathers a hundred children and lives a long time, so that he reaches a great age—but his soul is not satisfied with his possessions, or if he is deprived of burial, then I say that a stillborn child is better off than he, because the child comes in futility and leaves in darkness, and his name is covered in darkness. Though he has not seen the sun or had any knowledge, he has more rest than the other man, even if he lives a thousand years longer, and has had no satisfaction with what he has. Do not both of them go to the same place?

All of man's work is for his mouth,  
and yet the soul is not satisfied.  
What more does a wise man have than a fool?  
What does a poor man have  
if he knows how to behave in life?

Please keep falsehood and lying from me, Master; give me neither poverty nor riches, and please provide me only with the food I need.

I have put my trust in you, Master; my destiny is in your hands. Please provide me only with the food I need.

“Every man has received a gift from God if God has given him wealth and property and power to enjoy them and to accept his heritage and enjoy his work, because he will not notice his life as it passes because God has filled his heart with joy.” Compare this man with the one who is anxious about his wealth and is full of annoyance as he piles up possessions that are going to go out of existence. Our text says that it is better to enjoy what you have. The first man at least has some pleasure in what he has, while the second is bothered by too much worry.

And the reason is that the ability to enjoy riches is a gift from God; “he does not pay attention to his life as it passes,” because God allows him to enjoy the moment. Still, it is better to understand the text with the Emissary as referring to God’s gift of spiritual food and drink; human beings should contemplate goodness in their deeds, because it takes a great deal of work and study for us to contemplate true goodness. And this is our heritage: to enjoy study and work. This is a good goal, but not completely good “until the Prince is revealed in our lives.”

“All the work of a man is to satisfy his mouth, and yet his spirit will be hungry, because what does a wise man have more than a fool, except the knowledge of how to live?” All that human beings work for in this world is consumed by their mouths, chewed up by their teeth, and passed into the stomach for digestion. And even when something pleases taste, the pleasure only lasts as long as the person can taste it.

But after all this, the mind of the eater gets no satisfaction, because he will want to eat again, and neither wise man nor fool can live without food, and even a poor man wants nothing more than to keep his body alive and not die of starvation. Again, it may be because the spirit gains nothing useful from feeding the body. Food is the same for wise men and fools alike, and for a poor man, food is wealth.

But it is better to understand this text as referring to the man in Qoheleth who is learned in the sacred Scripture, and knows that neither mouth nor spirit is satisfied as long as he still desires learning. In this, a wise man has an advantage over a fool, because if he knows himself to be poor (and the poor are said to have received a blessing in the Good News), he makes an effort to understand the important things in life, and he walks the “cramped and narrow road that leads to life.” He is poor in immorality, and he knows where the Prince, who is our life, is to be found.

Master, Father and God of my life, please do not leave me to my evil thoughts, never let me look down disdainfully on others, protect me from the passionate cravings of my body, and preserve my soul from useless and shameful desire.

Please do not abandon me, my Master, or my faults will increase and my sins will grow more and more; and preserve my soul from useless and shameful desire.

**Prayer**

Dear Father, please keep before us the wisdom and love you have revealed in your Son, and help us to be like him in what we say and do, because he is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## hursday

*First Reading*

*Qobeleth 6.12-7.28*

And who knows what is good for a man in life, every day of his futile life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?

A good name is better than precious perfume,  
 and the day of death is better than the day of birth;  
 it is better to go into a house of mourning  
 than to enter a house where there is feasting,  
 because that is the end of every man,  
 and the living will take it to heart.  
 Sorrow is better than laughter,  
 because a heart is improved by a sad face;  
 hearts of the wise are in the house of mourning;  
 it is the hearts of fools that are in houses where there is mirth.  
 It is better to hear a reprimand from a wise man  
 than for a man to be the subject of fools' songs;  
 because the laughter of a fool  
 is like thorns crackling under a pot.  
 And this is also futility.

True, oppression destroys a wise man's reason,  
and a bribe degrades one's heart.  
The end of something is better than its beginning;  
a patient spirit is better than a proud spirit.  
Do not be quick in your spirit to be angry,  
because anger lives in the breasts of fools.  
Do not say,  
    "Why were the old days better than these?"  
because your question here is not a wise one.  
Wisdom is good—with an inheritance,  
and it is a benefit to those who see the sun;  
because wisdom is protection just as money is protection,  
but the virtue of wisdom is that wisdom gives life to its possessors.  
Consider what God has done.  
    Who can straighten what he has made crooked?  
In time of prosperity, enjoy it,  
but think of this in hard times:  
God certainly made one just as much as the other  
so that humans can find no fault with him.  
I saw everything in my futile days:  
    a good man dies in his virtue,  
    and an evil man lives long in his vice.  
Do not be too virtuous  
    or excessively wise;  
    why should you destroy yourself?  
Do not be too immoral,  
    or be stupid;  
    why should you die before your time?  
It is good for you to grasp this,  
    but not let the other rule go,  
    because a man who respects God will escape everything.  
Wisdom gives more strength to a wise man  
    than ten rulers of the city,  
but there is no virtuous man on earth who does good  
    and does not sin.  
Do not take to heart everything people say,  
    or you might hear your slave curse you;

because you know that many times  
     you have cursed others yourself.  
 I examined all this in wisdom;  
     I said, "I will be wise";  
     but it is far from me.  
 And who can discover  
     what is far off and very, very deep?  
 I applied my mind to know,  
     to search and find out wisdom and the reason for things;  
 to know that immorality is stupidity,  
     and stupidity is insanity.  
 I find more bitter than death  
     a woman whose heart is snares and nets,  
     whose hands are chains.  
 A man who pleases God will escape her,  
     but she will trap a sinner.  
 "Here is what I have discovered," says Qoheleth,  
     "adding one thing to another to find the reason  
     which my soul is looking for but cannot find.  
 I have found one man in a thousand here,  
     but I have found no woman among all of them."

Can anyone say, "My heart is pure; I am not a sinner"? There is no living man so holy that he does good and never sins.

If we claim to be sinless, we are deceiving ourselves; but if we admit our sins, then God, who is faithful and just, will forgive us. There is no living man so holy that he does good and never sins.

*Second Reading*

*An Instruction by St. Columban*

God is everywhere in his immensity, and is nearby everywhere. As he says of himself, "I am a god that is close by, not a God that is far away." The God we are searching for is not one who lives at a distance from us, because we have him present with us, if only we are deserving. He has his home in us in the same way the soul lives in the body, if we are healthy cells in his body; if we are dead to sin. Then in actual fact, the one who said, "I will make my home in them and walk among them" is living in us. If we deserve to have his presence in us, then in fact we are made living by him as living cells in his body. As the Emissary says, "We live,

move, and have our being in him.”

And I ask, who will search out the Supreme Being in his own reality, because he is beyond words or understanding? Who will penetrate the secrets of God? Who will make the claim that he knows the infinite God, who fills everything, and yet includes everything, who pervades everything and reaches beyond everything, who holds everything in his hand and yet escapes the grasp of anything? “No one has ever seen him as he is.”

And so no one is to presume to search out the unsearchable things of God: his nature, the kind of existence he has, his selfhood. These are beyond telling, beyond scrutiny, beyond investigation. Simply believe with simplicity, but with strength too, that this is how God is and how he will be, because God is incapable of change.

Then who is God? He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; one God. Those who want to understand the unfathomable depths of God must first consider the world of nature. Knowledge of the Trinity is fittingly compared with the depth of the ocean. Wisdom asks, “Who will find out what is so very deep?” In the same way as the depths of the sea are invisible to human sight, the Godhead of the Trinity is found to be beyond the grasp of human understanding. If anyone, I say, wants to know what he should believe, he must not imagine that he understands better through speech than through belief; the knowledge of God that he is looking for will be farther off than it was before.

So search out the highest wisdom by the perfection of your life, not by reasoning in words, by the faith that comes from simplicity of heart, not by speech and not from the learned speculations of immoral people. If you look for the God who cannot be defined in words by means of discussions, “he will go farther away from you” than he was before. If you search him out by faith, “wisdom will stand” where wisdom lives, “at the gates.” Wisdom will be seen, at least in part, where wisdom is. But wisdom is also to some extent truly attained when the invisible God is the object of faith, in a way beyond our understanding, because we must believe in God, even though he is invisible, because he is partly seen by a heart that is pure.

Master, your love reaches to the heavens and your fidelity to the clouds. Your virtue is like the mountains of God, and your pronouncements like



the fathomless ocean.

How deep are the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments! Your virtue is like the mountains of God, and your pronouncements like the fathomless ocean.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, please keep before us the wisdom and love you have revealed in your Son, and help us to be like him in what we say and do, because he is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

*Qoheleth 8.5-9.10*

One who keeps YHWH's command will have no harm happen to him,  
and a wise man's heart knows times and the proper choice,  
because there is a time and a proper choice for everything—  
though it adds a great deal to man's suffering  
that he does not know what will happen.

Who can tell him how things will be?

No one has power over his breath to keep it,  
and no one has power over the day of his death.

There is no cease-fire in that war,  
and immorality will not save those who devote themselves to it.

I have seen all this, and applied my mind to every deed done under  
the sun; while one man tyrannizes over another to his harm.

Then I saw evil men buried; and as they left the sacred place, they  
were praised in the city for what they had done. And this too is futility,  
because the sentence against wrongdoers is not carried out quickly, and  
this is why the hearts of mortal men are fixed on doing wrong.

But even though a sinner does evil a hundred times and lives a long  
life, I know for certain that good will come to those who respect God  
and have reverence for him, and ruin will come on immoral people, and  
his days will not go on and on, because they are like a shadow, since he  
has no respect for God.

There is futility that happens on earth: that there are virtuous people who have happen to them what should be the result of immoral actions, and there are immoral people who have happen to them what should result from virtuous actions. I said that this too is futility.

So I recommended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and enjoy himself; this is what will stay with him in his work all the days of life which God gives him under the sun.

When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to see what people busy themselves with on earth, I found out that a man cannot discover all the work God does under the sun, even if he sees no sleep day or night. Even though a man works hard at finding it, he will not discover it; and even if a wise man tries to know it, he will not find it either.

But I kept this in mind so that I could report all of it: that virtuous and wise people and what they do are in God's hands. People cannot recognize love or hatred by what they see before them; everything happens to everyone without differentiation.

The same event happens to virtuous and vicious people,

to good, clean ones, and to unclean ones,

to the people making sacrifices and those who make no sacrifice.

The sinner is the same as a good man;

one who curses and a person who is afraid to curse.

And this is a wrong that happens under the sun: that the same thing happens to everyone. It is true that men's hearts are full of evil; there is insanity in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the land of the dead. But there is hope for those who are among the living; a living dog is better than a dead lion.

True, the living know that they will die,

but corpses know nothing,

and they have no more reward,

because there is no more remembrance of them.

And their love, their hatred, and their envy have died,

and they will never again have a share

in what is done under the sun.

Go eat your bread and enjoy it,

and drink your wine with pleasure,

because God has already accepted what you have done;

dress yourselves in white clothes

and do not spare the scented oil on your head.

Live and take pleasure in the wife whom you love all the days of the futile life he has given you under the sun—for all your days of futility, because that is your lot in life and in the work you perform under the sun.

Do whatever your hand finds to do with all your might, because there is no work or reasoning or knowledge or wisdom in the grave you are headed for.

No eye has seen, no ear heard, nor has the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love him. God has revealed this through his Spirit, who scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.

Man stands bewildered before the mystery of all God's deeds. God has revealed this through his Spirit, who scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.

*Second Reading*

*Commentary on Qoheleth  
by St. Gregory of Argrigentum*

“Come eat your bread and enjoy it, and take pleasure in drinking your wine, because what you have done has pleased God.” If we were to interpret this text in its obvious, ordinary sense, it would be correct to call it a virtuous encouragement, in which Qoheleth advises us to take up a simple way of life and be led by teaching that involves a genuine faith in God. Then we can eat our bread and enjoy it and take pleasure in drinking our wine; we will not fall into slanderous speech or be involved in anything devious; we would think what is right and, as far as we can, help the poor and destitute with mercy and generosity, and really be dedicated to pursuits and good deeds that please God.

But a spiritual interpretation of the text leads us to a higher meaning, and teaches us to take this as the heavenly and mystical bread, the one that has come down from heaven and brought life to the world, and to drink a spiritual wine and take pleasure in it, the wine being what flowed from the side of the real vine at the time of his suffering that saved us. The Good News of our rescue says this on this point: “When Jesus had taken bread and said the blessing over it, he told his holy students and emissaries, ‘Take this and eat it; this is my body, which is broken for you

for forgiveness of sins'; and in the same way, he took the cup and said, 'All of you drink from this; this is my blood ratifying the new treaty, blood which will be shed for you and for many, many others for the forgiveness of sins.'" That is, whoever eats this bread and drinks this mystical wine enjoys true happiness and exclaims in his joy, "You have put happiness into my heart!"

In fact, I think this is the bread and the wine referred to in the book of Proverbs by God's personified Wisdom, our Savior the Prince, when it says, "Come eat my bread and drink the wine I have mixed for you," and by doing so refers to our mystical sharing in the Word. That is, those who have the right to receive this are always dressed in deeds of light, which shine like a brilliant illumination, as the Master says in the Good News: "Have your light shine in front of people, so that they will see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven." And, in fact, oil appears to flow over their heads continually, the oil that is the Spirit of Truth, who guards and preserves them from all the harm of sin.

The Master is right beside me; I will not be dislodged. And that is why my heart is full of joy, and my spirit is glad.

The Master is my inheritance and the cup I am served. And that is why my heart is full of joy, and my spirit is glad.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, please keep before us the wisdom and love you have revealed in your Son, and help us to be like him in what we say and do, because he is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

Light is really pleasant;  
and it is cheering for the eyes to see the sun;  
but if a man lives many years  
and enjoys all of them,

*Qoheleth 11.7-12.14*

he still should remember the time of darkness,  
because it will be long.  
Everything that is coming is futility.  
Enjoy your youth, young man,  
and take your pleasure while you are young;  
follow your heart  
and your eyes,  
but realize for all of this  
God will pass his judgment on you.  
And so root sorrow out of your heart  
and remove evil from your body,  
because childhood and youth are futility.  
And remember your Creator now, during your youth,  
before the hard times come  
and the years approach when you will say,  
“I have no pleasure in them”  
while the sun and the light  
and the moon and stars  
are not darkened,  
and the clouds do not return after rain,  
in the days when the guards of the house are frightened  
and strong men bow down,  
when grinders stop making flour, because there are few of them,  
and those looking through windows grow blind,  
when doors are shut in the streets,  
and the sounds of mills are muffled,  
when a man is startled at the sound of a bird,  
since all music’s daughters have died off,  
when one is afraid of high places  
and of terrors along the road,  
when almond trees blossom  
and locusts grow tired,  
and desire fails,  
because man is going to his eternal home  
and mourners are out in the streets.  
Remember your Creator before the silver cord is untied  
or the golden bowl is broken

or the pitcher shattered at the spring  
 or the wheel broken at the well;  
 because then the dirt will return to the earth as it was,  
 and the spirit will return to God, who gave it.  
 “Futility and more than futility,” says Qoheleth.  
 “Everything is futility.”

In addition to this, because Qoheleth was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and investigated and arranged many proverbs. Qoheleth tried to find proper words, and what was written was honest: words of truth. The words of wise men are like spurs, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one shepherd. Also, my son, take advice from these. There is no end to the writing of books, and a great deal of wasted effort in a great deal of study.

Let us listen to the conclusion of the whole matter:  
 Have reverence for God and keep his commandments,  
 because this is all there is for man,  
 because God will bring everything man does into court,  
 including everything secret,  
 whether it is good or evil.

My God, you taught me from the time I was young, and to this day I acknowledge your marvelous deeds. Please do not abandon me in my old age.

Your presence fills me with joy, and eternal pleasures are there beside you. Please do not abandon me in my old age.

*Second Reading*

*A Commentary on Qoheleth  
 by St. Gregory of Agrigentum*

In the words of Qoheleth, “Light is pleasant in itself,” and it is a pleasure for the eye to be able to see the sun. A world devoid of light would be without beauty, and life would be lifeless. That was why Moses, who saw God, said in anticipation, “And God saw the light and said that it was good.”

But to reflect on the true and eternal light is even more fitting for us. This light is the Prince, who “shines on every man who comes into the world,” the savior and redeemer of the world. He is the one who became man and sank to the very depths of the human condition. As David said,

“Sing to God a hymn in his name; make a highway for the one who rises in the west. His name is the Master; celebrate him!”

He called this light gratifying and foretold that it would be good to see the sun of glory. In the days of his incarnation, he said, “I am the world’s light; anyone who follows me will not walk in darkness, since he will possess the light of life.” On another occasion, he said, “This is the verdict: that light has come into the world.”

And so sunlight is a symbol. What we see with our eyes foretells the coming of the Sun of Virtue. He was a supremely gratifying light for those who had the privilege of being taught by him personally; he was also a radiance to those who saw him with their physical eyes when he lived on earth as a man among men. It was not just any man they saw, because he was really God. He made the blind see, the lame walk, and the deaf hear; he washed the lepers clean, and by a simple command raised the dead back to life.

And now it is our supreme delight to look on him and contemplate his divine splendor with the eyes of our spirit. When we participate in and associate with that beauty, we are illuminated and adorned, and this is what we take pleasure in. We enjoy being saturated with the pleasantness of the Spirit, in being dressed in holiness, and in achieving wisdom. And finally, we are filled with a joy that comes from God and lasts through all the days of our earthly life. In the wise words of Qoheleth, “A man may live for many years, and he will experience happiness all the days of his life.” That is, everyone who gazes on the Sun of Virtue has him as his supreme pleasure. David spoke of these people in this way: “They are to enjoy themselves before God and leap about with happiness.” In fact, he even said, “Make the Master your pleasure, virtuous people, because praise comes appropriately from honest folk.”

Join me in giving glory to God, and let us praise his name together. Look to him and be radiant with happiness, and never let your faces blush with embarrassment.

God has given us the privilege of sharing the fate of his sacred people in the light; he has set us free from the power of darkness. Look to him and be radiant with happiness, and never let your faces blush with embarrassment.

Prayer

Dear Father, please keep before us the wisdom and love you have revealed in your Son, and help us be like him in what we say and do, because he is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



# Eight Sunday in ORDINARY TIME

## *First Reading*

*Job 1.1-22*

In the land of Uz, there was an irreproachable, honest man named Job, one who respected God and avoided evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household; and so was the greatest of all his people in the east.

His sons used to take turns having parties in their houses, and would invite their three sisters to dine with them. And when the parties were over, Job would send for them and purify them by rising early in the morning and making a holocaust for each of them, since Job said, "It is possible that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Job did this regularly.

One day, when the descendants of God, accompanied by Satan, came to present themselves before YHWH, YHWH said to Satan, "Where did you come from?"

"From roaming over the earth and patrolling it," Satan answered.

YHWH said, "Did you notice my slave Job, who has no peer on earth? He is an irreproachable, honest man, who respects God and avoids evil."

And Satan answered, "Does he respect God for nothing? Have you not built a hedge around him and his household and everything he has everywhere? You have blessed everything his hands have done, and his possessions have grown through the land. But if you were to reach out and touch all he has, he would be sure to curse you to your face."

Then YHWH told Satan, "Very well; he is in your power, but do not lay a hand on his person." And Satan left YHWH's presence.

One day, when Job's sons and daughters were dining in their oldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing with donkeys grazing beside them, when the Sabeans stole them in a raid; in fact, they slaughtered the slaves with their swords, and I am the only one who escaped to tell you!"

While he was still speaking, another came up and said, "Lightning fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the slaves completely; and I am the only one to escape and tell you!"

And while he spoke, still another came up and said, "The Chaldeans divided into three gangs, raided the camels and stole them, and killed the slaves with their swords too; and I am the only one who escaped to tell you!"

And while he too was still speaking, another came up and said, "Your sons and daughters were dining in their oldest brother's house, and suddenly a windstorm came across the desert and hit the house on all four sides, and it fell on the young people; and they are dead. I am the only one to escape and tell you!"

Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and cut off his hair. He fell prostrate in worship, and said,

"I came naked from my mother's womb,  
and I will go back naked.

The Master gave me these things, and the Master has taken them back.  
Blessed be YHWH's name."

And in all this, Job did not blame God or accuse him of wrong.

If we accept happiness from God, should we not accept misery too? The Master gives us things, and the Master takes them back; let his will be done. Blessed be the Master's name.

I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will go back naked.  
The Master gives us things, and the Master takes them back; let his will be done. Blessed be the Master's name.

*Second Reading Moral Reflections on Job by St. Gregory the Great*

Some men are so innocent that they do not recognize what virtue is; but the more they abandon the innocence of true simplicity, the less they rise to moral excellence, since in not knowing how to guide their actions

by correct living, they are too simple to remain innocent.

And so Paul warns his students with these words, "I want you to be wise in what is good, but innocent of evil." Again, he says, "Do not be like children in your thinking; be like infants in evil." And the Truth himself similarly tells his students, "Be wise as snakes and simple as doves." In this command, he has deliberately joined the two ideas together; the snake's cunning compliments the dove's simplicity, and the dove's simplicity moderates the snake's cunning.

This is why the Holy Spirit reveals his presence to human beings not only as a dove but as fire too; the dove represents simplicity, and the fire, intense dedication. And so the dove and the fire, taken together, have a special significance: whoever is filled with the Holy Spirit becomes so dedicated to this gentle simplicity that he is also on fire with the zeal of virtue against the faults of sinners.

"An innocent, honest man is one who respects God and turns away from evil." Whoever is looking for our eternal country obviously lives an innocent, virtuous life. He is innocent in his deeds, honest in his faith; he is innocent in the good actions he performs here on earth, and honest in the high ideals he perceives deep within himself. There are, of course, some who are not simple in this good action, because they are looking for an external reputation, not an inner reward. And so the wise man correctly said, "The sinner who walks the earth along two paths is doomed." Sinners do, in fact, walk over the face of the earth in two directions: externally, their actions seem to be holy, but internally, their thoughts are worldly.

This is a good saying, then: "He respects God and turns away from evil," because the holy Church of the chosen people sets out along the path of simplicity and virtue in fear, but finishes it in love, since it is the Church's task to turn completely away from evil; once she has begun by love of God, she rejects sin. If she still does good only out of fear, she has not inwardly withdrawn from evil, because she commits sin by desiring to sin, if she could only sin without punishment.

And so Job was correctly said to respect God, because he turned away from evil; because love is moved by respect when the mind rejects the thought of sin.

May God give you all the goodness you need to do his will; may he

accomplish in you everything that pleases him through Prince Jesus.

May he open your heart to his law and his regulations; may he accomplish in you everything that pleases him through Prince Jesus.

#### Prayer

Dear Master, please guide the course of world events and give your Church the joy and peace of serving you in freedom. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

*Job 2.1-13*

Another day when God's descendants came to present themselves before YHWH, Satan also came among them to present himself before YHWH, and YHWH said to Satan, "Where did you come from?"

"From roaming the earth, and patrolling it," answered Satan.

"Did you notice my slave Job?" YHWH asked Satan. "There is no one like him on earth, an innocent, honest man, a man who respects God and avoids evil. And he still holds on to his integrity, even though you egged me on to ruin him for no reason."

Satan replied to YHWH, "Skin for skin! Yes, a man will give everything he has for his life; but reach out now and touch his bones and flesh, and he will be sure to curse you to your face."

And YHWH said to Satan, "Very well, he is in your power; but spare his life."

So Satan left YHWH's presence and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; and he took a broken pot to scratch himself while he sat in the ashes. And then his wife told him, "Are you still holding on to that integrity of yours? Curse God and die!"

But he answered her, "You speak like a woman without sense. We accept good things from God; should we not accept bad things?" And in all this Job committed no sin with his lips.

Then, when Job's three friends heard of all these reverses that had

come upon him, each came from his own place: Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuh, and Zophar from Naamath. They met and journeyed together to give him sympathy and comfort; and when they looked up from a distance and did not recognize him, they cried out and wept, and each of them tore his robe and threw dirt down upon his head, and sat down with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights, while no one spoke a word to him, since they saw how enormous his grief was.

Dear God, please do not punish me in your anger; your arrows have pierced right through me. My body is sick because of your indignation.

My friends and neighbors avoid me in my sickness; my body is sick because of your indignation.

*Second Reading Moral Reflections on Job by St. Gregory the Great*

When Paul saw within himself the riches of internal wisdom, yet was aware of the corruptibility of his own body, he was led to say, "We have this treasure in earthenware pots." Here in blessed Job, the earthenware pot felt the gaping sores in its exterior, while the treasure of wisdom remained whole and intact inside it. That is, outwardly, his body was in agony, but inwardly, from the treasure of wisdom came holy thoughts: "If we have accepted good things from the Master's hand, why should we not endure bad things?" The "good" here refers either to the temporal or the eternal gifts of God, and the "evil" to the disasters of the present time, about which the Master says through the prophet, "I am the Master and there is no other one. I form light and create darkness; I make peace and create harm."

"I form light and create darkness," because though outwardly these disasters create the darkness of anguish, inwardly knowledge lights the light of the mind. "I make peace and create harm," because peace with God is restored to us when what was properly created for us but not ordinarily desired are turned into plagues and become harm for us. It is through sin that we become opposed to God, and so it is fitting for us to return to his peace by way of disasters. In this way, when everything created for good is turned into a source of pain for us, the mind of the punished man can be humbly renewed and restored to peace with his Creator.

We should take particular note of Job's words to see how skillfully he

meets his wife's urging: "If we have accepted good things from God, why should we not accept bad things?" It is a great comfort in suffering if, in times of trouble, we recall the gifts our Creator has given us. And overwhelming pain will not break us if we quickly call to mind the gifts that have sustained us. That is, it is written, "Do not forget hardship in times of prosperity, and in times of hardship, do not forget prosperity." That is, if a man accepts God's gifts, but forgets his hardship, he can fall through his own excess of happiness. On the other hand, when a man is bruised by these whippings, but is not at all consoled by the thought of the blessings he has been lucky enough to receive, he is completely devastated.

And so both attitudes have to be united, so that one will support the other: the memory of the gift can temper the pain of hardship, and the dread and fear of hardship can modify the joy of the gift. And so holy Job, to soothe his soul's depression in the midst of his injuries, weighs the pleasurable gifts he has received even while he suffers his whipping, and says, "If we have accepted good things from the Master's hand, why should we not endure bad things?"

If we receive happiness from God, should we not also accept suffering? The Master gives us gifts and the Master takes them back; may his will be done. Blessed be the Master's name.

In all his sufferings, Job did not sin, and did not cast blame upon God. The Master gives us gifts and the Master takes them back; may his will be done. Blessed be the Master's name.

#### Prayer

Dear Master, please guide the course of world events and give your Church the joy and peace of serving you in freedom. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

*First Reading**Job 3.1-26*

After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day he was born. Job began speaking, and said,

“I wish the day I was born never existed  
or the night when they said,  
‘A boy is born!’

Turn that day into darkness!

Do not let God above look for it  
or light shine on it!

Have darkness and the shadow of death claim it,  
and a cloud settle over it.

Make the blackness terrify that day  
and let darkness take over the night;  
give it no joy among the days of the year,  
and keep it out of the count of the months!

If only that night had been barren,  
with no joyful shout coming into it!

Have those who curse the sea curse that day,  
those who are there to disturb Leviathan.

Darken the stars of its morning;  
may it look for light and find none,  
and not see the dawning of the day,  
because it did not shut the doors of my mother’s womb  
or hide my eyes from agony!

Why did I not die at birth?

Why did I not end my life as I came from the womb?

Why did the knees receive me?

Why did I find breasts to nurse?

Then I would have lain down and been quiet;

I would have been asleep;

then I would have been at rest

with kings and their advisors over the earth

who built for themselves what now are ruins—

or with heads of state who had gold

and filled their houses with silver.  
 Why was I not buried like a stillborn child,  
 like infants who never saw light?  
 There, evil people stop causing trouble,  
 and there, the weary are at rest.  
 There, prisoners relax together,  
 and cannot hear the voice of their oppressors.  
 The little ones and the great ones are there,  
 and slaves are free of their masters.  
 Why is light given to those in misery  
 and life to those whose lives are bitter,  
 who long for death that does not come,  
 and search for it more than for a hidden treasure,  
 who are overjoyed  
 and jubilant when they find the grave?  
 Why is light given to those whose paths are hidden,  
 and those whom God has trapped?  
 Sobs come to me in place of food  
 and groaning pour out of me like water,  
 because what I dreaded has happened to me.  
 I have no peace now, no quiet,  
 and no rest, because trouble has taken over.”

My sobs have become my food, and my tears pour out of me like  
 streams; everything I am afraid of happens, and whatever I dread comes  
 upon me; and trouble takes over, Master.

I am a man without help, and assistance is beyond my reach; and  
 trouble takes over, Master.

*Second reading*

*The Confessions of St. Augustine*

Master, you know me; please let me know you. Let me come to  
 know you “as well as I am known.” You are my soul’s strength; please  
 enter it and make it a place that is fit for you to live in, a possession  
 “without any spot or blemish.” This is my hope, and the reason I am  
 speaking; I find my happiness in this hope when my happiness is the  
 proper one. As for other things in this life, the less they deserve tears, the  
 more likely they are to be wept over, and the more they deserve tears, the



less likely people will be to grieve over them. “Yes, you have loved the truth, because the one who does what is true enters light.” I want to do what is true only in your eyes by praising you, and in the eyes of many, many others looking on by writing about you.

Master, the depths of a man’s conscience are perfectly clear to your eyes. Could anything in me stay hidden, even if I did not want to admit it to you? In that case, I would only be hiding you from myself, not myself from you. But my sobs are enough evidence that I am not satisfied with myself, and that you are my light and the source of my happiness, as well as that you are loved and desired. I am totally ashamed of myself; I have given myself up and chosen you, with the recognition that I cannot please either you or myself unless you make me able to do so.

Whoever I am, Master, I am a book open to your scrutiny. I have already told you about the good it does me when I acknowledge what I am to you; and I do not make my confession with physical words, with physical language; I do so with words in my soul and my mind’s cries, which you hear and understand. When I do wrong, my confession to you is an expression of my dissatisfaction with myself; but when I do good, my admissions consist in not ascribing this goodness to myself. That is, “You bless a virtuous man, Master,” but first “you make an evil person virtuous.” And so I make my confession to you in silence—and yet not in silence; my voice is silent, but my heart cries out.

You are my judge, Master. “Because even though no one knows a man’s most intimate thoughts except the man’s own interior spirit,” there is still something in a man which even his own spirit does not know. But you know all about him, because you made him. In my own case, I despise myself in your sight, since I know that I am nothing but dirt and ashes; and yet I know something about you that I do not know about myself.

True, “we see now indistinctly, as if it were in a darkened mirror, and not yet face to face.” And so, as long as I am in exile from you, I am more present to myself than to you; but I do not that you cannot be conquered, while I am not sure which temptations I can resist and which I cannot. Still, I have hope, because you “are faithful and do not let us be tempted beyond our endurance; but you give us the means to withstand the temptation as you give it.”

And so I will confess what I know about myself, and also what I do not know. The knowledge that I have of myself I possess because you have given me light, while the knowledge of myself that I do not possess yet will not be mine until my darkness will become like the noonday sun before your face.

Master, you have examined me and you know me; you perceive my thoughts from far off.

Where would I go away from your spirit? Where would I escape from your presence? You perceive my thoughts from far off.

#### Prayer

Dear Master, please guide the course of world events and give your Church the joy and peace of serving you in freedom. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## Wednesday

#### First Reading

*Job 7 1-21*

Is not man's whole life on earth drudgery?

Are not his days like a hired hand's—  
like a slave, who longs for shade  
or a worker who thinks of nothing but salary.

I have been assigned months of futility,  
and nights of worry are what I have been given.

When I lie down, I say, "When will I get up  
and the night be over?"

Because I have had my fill of tossing and turning till dawn.

My body is caked with worms and dirt,  
and my skin is cracking and breaking out.

My days go by more quickly than a weaver's shuttle,  
and come to an end with no hope.

Remember that my life is a breath;  
I will never again see anything good.

The eyes that are looking at me will not see me any longer;  
you will look for me, and I will not be there.  
A man who goes down to the grave does not come up;  
he is like a cloud that dissipates and is gone.  
He will never go back to his house,  
and his place will no longer know him.  
And so I will not put a rein on my mouth;  
I will speak out in my spirit's agony;  
I will complain in my soul's bitterness.  
Am I the ocean, or some monster in it  
that you set a guard to watch me?  
When I say, "my bed will be my comfort,  
the couch will ease my suffering,"  
you terrify me with dreams  
and horrify me with visions,  
so that my soul would rather strangle  
and die than stay in my body.  
I loathe my life;  
I do not want to live forever.  
Leave me alone,  
because my days are only a breath.  
What is man, for you to elevate him,  
or for you to set your heart on him,  
for you to visit him every morning  
and torment him at every moment?  
How long is it to last?  
Please, won't you look away from me  
and let me alone to swallow my saliva?  
Have I sinned?  
What have I done to you, you examiner of men?  
Why have you made me your target,  
so that I am a burden to myself?  
Why do you not pardon my guilt  
and take away the wrong I have done?  
Because I will now lie down in the dirt  
and you will look and look for me;  
but I will no longer exist.

My body is covered with decay; my skin is cracked and breaking out. Please remember, Master, that my life is a breath.

My life passes as quickly as a weaver's shuttle, and once gone there is no hope of calling it back again. Please remember, Master, that my life is a breath.

*Second Reading*

*The Confessions of St. Augustine*

Where did I find you, so that I came to know you? You were not in my memory before I learned about you. Then where did I find you before I came to know you, if not there inside yourself, far above me? We come to you and we go from you, but there is no place involved in this; you, my Truth, are present to those who are looking for help from you, and at one and the same time you answer everyone, even though they are making different requests.

And you answer clearly; but not everyone hears you clearly. Everyone asks for what he wants, but they do not always hear the answer they want. Your best servant is the one who is interested in choosing whatever he hears from you, rather than in hearing his plea answered.

It was a long time before I loved you, Beauty that is always old, always new; it was a long time before I loved you. You were inside me; it was I who was outside, and there is where I searched for you. In my ugliness, I plunged into the lovely things you created; you were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you—and yet if they had not been in you, they would not have existed at all.

You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness; you sparkled and shone, and you rid me of my blindness; you breathed your fragrance on me, and I inhaled, and now I am panting for you. I have tasted you, and now I am hungry and thirsty for more; you touched me, and I burned for your peace.

When I am once united to you with my whole being, I will be free at last of suffering and drudgery; and then my life will be alive and filled entirely with you. When you fill someone, you take off his burden; but because I am not filled with you as yet, I am still a burden to myself. My happiness when I should be weeping struggles with my suffering when I should be happy. I do not know where my victory is. I am a wreck! Master, please have mercy on me! My evil pains and good pleasures are at war with each other; I do not know where my victory is. I am a wreck!

Master, Please have mercy on me. I am a wreck! I am not trying to hide my wounds at all; you are the doctor, and I am the patient. You are merciful, and I need mercy.

“Is not man’s life on earth drudgery?” Who would want troubles and difficulties? You command us to put up with them, not to love them; no one loves what he puts up with, though he may love the act of enduring—because, even if he is happy to endure his own burden, he would still rather have the burden not exist. I long for prosperity in times of hardship, and I am afraid of hardship when times are good; and yet what middle ground is there between these two extremes where man’s life would be anything but drudgery?

Pity this world’s prosperity; pity it a second time and once again, because it corrupts happiness and brings the fear of hardship. Pity this world’s hardship; pity it again and then a third time, because it fills people with a yearning for prosperity, and because hardship itself is difficult to bear and can even break their endurance. “Is not man’s life on earth drudgery,” continuous drudgery?

All my hope rests only on your great mercy.

It was a long time before I loved you, Beauty that is always old, always new; it was a long time before I loved you. You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness.

The Son of Man came to search out the lost and lead them to rescue. You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness.

#### Prayer

Dear Master, please guide the course of world events and give your Church the joy and peace of serving you in freedom. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.


 THURSDAY
*First Reading**Job 11.1-20*

Zophar from Naamath spoke up and said,  
 “Shouldn’t this torrent of words have an answer?  
     Should a man full of talk win?  
 Should your empty mouthings silence everyone,  
     and when you sneer, should no one take you up?  
 You claim what you teach is pure  
     and that you are clean in God’s eyes.  
 Ah, but if God were to speak  
     and open his lips against you  
 for him to show you the secrets of his wisdom,  
     and how they are twice as smart as you.  
 Know that God is demanding from you  
     less than your crimes deserve.  
 Can you penetrate the deep designs of God?  
     Can you set limits for omnipotence?  
 These secrets are higher than heaven. What can you do?  
     They are deeper than the world below. What can you know?  
 They extend farther than the earth  
     and are wider than the ocean.  
 If he comes by and claps you into prison, and condemns you,  
     who can stop him?  
     He knows how deceitful men are.  
 And he sees the evil that is there,  
     and is he not to take it into account?  
 An empty-headed man will be wise  
     when a donkey’s colt is born a human being.  
 If you were to straighten out your heart  
     and stretch out your hands to him;  
 if you were to remove all injustice from your hands  
     and would not let evil find a home in your tents,  
 then you could be sure to lift up your immaculate face,  
     and you could be secure, without any fear,  
 because you would forget your misery

and remember it like water under the bridge;  
 you life would be as bright as noon,  
 and any darkness in you would be like the morning;  
 and you would be secure, because there is hope.  
 Yes, you would dig out a resting-place and lie down safely,  
 and you would take your rest, and no one would intimidate you;  
 and many people would be begging for your favor,  
 while immoral eyes would look on with envy—  
 and they will find no escape,  
 and their only hope will be to die.”

We are tormented in every way, but not overwhelmed; we are bewildered but do not lose hope. We suffer oppression, but have not been abandoned.

At every moment, we carry in our bodies the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be revealed in our bodies too. We suffer oppression, but have not been abandoned.

*Second Reading*      *Moral Reflections on Job by St. Gregory the Great*

How are we to interpret this law of God? How, if not by love—the love that stamps the regulations of correct living on the mind and demands that we put them into practice. Listen to Truth speak of this law: “This is my commandment: for you to love each other.” Listen to Paul: “The whole law,” he says, “is summed up in love”; and again, “Help each other in your troubles, and you will fulfill the Prince’s law.” The Prince’s law; does anything other than love describe it better? Yes, we are keeping this law when, out of love, we go to help a brother in trouble.

But we are told that this law is many-faceted. Why? Because love’s zealous concern for others is reflected in all the virtues. It begins with two commands, but soon embraces many more. Paul gives a good summary of its various aspects: “Love is patient,” he says, “and kind; it is not ambitious, not selfish, not touchy; it does not harbor grudges, and is not happy over others’ troubles; it is happy over a good life.”

A person ruled by this love shows his patience by putting up with wrongs calmly; he shows his kindness by generously repaying good for evil. Jealousy is something foreign to him; it is impossible to envy worldly

success when a person has no worldly desires. He is not conceited; the prizes he is aiming for are within him, and outward blessings do not give him pleasure. His conduct is irreproachable, because he cannot do wrong in devoting himself entirely to the love of God and his neighbor.

The welfare of his own soul is what he cares about; apart from that, he has no interest in anything. He is not selfish; since he cannot keep anything he has in this world, he is as indifferent to it as if it belonged to someone else. In fact, in his own eyes, nothing belongs to him except what will always belong to him. He is not touchy; even under provocation, thoughts of revenge never enter his mind. The reward he is looking for after this life will be greater in proportion to what he has to put up with. He harbors no evil thoughts. Hatred is utterly rooted out of a heart whose only love is goodness; thoughts that contaminate a man can find no entry. He does not gloat over other people's harm; an enemy's fall gives him no pleasure, because, in loving everyone, he is anxious for their rescue.

On the other hand, "he finds pleasure in a virtuous life." Since he loves everyone else as much as he loves himself, he takes as much pleasure in whatever good he sees in them as if the progress were his own. That is why the law of God is many-faceted.

Owe no one anything except the debt of love to each other, because anyone who loves his neighbor fulfills the law. Love is the fulfillment of the law.

All God's commandments are summed up in this one: Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. Love is the fulfillment of the law.

#### Prayer

Dear Master, please guide the course of world events and give your Church the joy and peace of serving you in freedom. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



*First Reading**Job 12.1-25*

Job then spoke, and said,  
 “Of course you are the only people who matter,  
     and wisdom will die with you!  
 But I have intelligence too,  
     and it is not worse than yours.  
     And is there anyone who does not know what you said?  
 Here I am, made fun of by my friends:  
     ‘He is the one who calls on God, and he answers,  
     the virtuous, innocent man,’—the one people make fun of!  
 A person resting thinks little of a lamp,  
     which is for people whose feet might slip.  
 Robbers’ tents are full of wealth,  
     and those who provoke God are secure  
     in what God’s hands bestow on them.  
 But now ask the animals to teach you something,  
     or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you—  
 or ask the earth itself to teach you  
     and the fish in the ocean to explain things to you.  
 Is there anything among all of them that does not know  
     that YHWH’s hand has done this?  
 Every living thing has its life in his hands,  
     as well as all mankind’s breath and spirit.  
 Is the ear not to be judge of words  
     the way the mouth tastes its food?  
 Wisdom belongs to old men,  
     and intelligence comes as the years pass by.  
 He has wisdom and power as his possession,  
     and sage advice and understanding belong to him.  
 If he demolishes something, it cannot be rebuilt;  
     if he imprisons someone, there can be no release.  
 If he holds back the water, streams dry up;  
     if he pours it out, they drown the land.  
 Strength and good judgment belong to him;

he owns deceivers and those they deceive;  
 he takes advisors away after they are looted,  
 and makes fools of judges.  
 He unties what kings have bound up  
 and leaves only a loincloth on the kings;  
 he sends ministers away with nothing  
 and topples the powerful;  
 he silences advisors  
 and deprives the elders of their discretion;  
 he pours contempt on those in authority  
 and disarms those in power;  
 he reveals what is hidden in darkness  
 and brings the shadow of death to light.  
 He makes nations great and destroys them,  
 he increases their territory and abandons them;  
 he removes understanding from the leaders of the land  
 and makes them wander in a pathless desert;  
 they grope around in the dark, without light,  
 and he makes them stagger about like drunks.”

All wisdom and power belong to God, and he own sage advice and understanding. When he destroys something, there is no rebuilding it, and if he imprisons a man, no one can release him.

Once he has decided, no one can change his mind; whatever he determines to do, he does. When he destroys something, there is no rebuilding it, and if he imprisons a man, no one can release him.

*Second Reading Moral Reflections on Job by St. Gregory the Great*

“If anyone is made fun of by his friends in the way I am, he will call on God, and God will listen to him.” A weak-minded person is often distracted toward going after external happiness when the breath of popular favor comes along with his good actions. Then he gives up his own personal choices, and prefers to be at the mercy of whatever he hears from others; and in this way, he is happy at being called fortunate, not so much at being so. Since he is eager to be praised, he gives up what he has begun to be, and so he is cut off from God by the very means by which he seemed to be approved by God.

But sometimes a soul steadfastly exerts himself for virtue, and yet is attacked by ridicule from people; he does what is admirable, but only receives derision. He might have gone away from himself because of human praise, but he returns to himself when he is repelled by their abuse. And since he finds to rest outside, he clings more strongly to God within him. All his hope is fixed on his Creator, and among all the ridicule and abuse, he listens only to his interior witness. One who has this kind of trouble grows closer to God the more he turns away from human popularity; he immediately pours himself out in prayer, and because of the pressure from outside, he is refined with a more complete purity to penetrate what is inside him.

In this context, the words apply: "If anyone is made fun of by his friends in the way I am, he will call upon God, and God will listen to him." While immoral people speak disparagingly of virtuous ones, they show them the one they should look to as the witness of their actions. And when it is in this kind of trouble, the soul strengthens itself by prayer; it is united interiorly to the one who listens from high above, precisely because it is cut off externally from the praise of human beings. Again, we should notice how appropriately the words "in the way I am" are inserted. There are some people who are both oppressed by ridicule from human beings and yet are deprived of a favorable hearing from God; because when ridicule comes to a person because of his own sin, it obviously does not produce the merit that is due to virtue.

"A virtuous man's naivete is laughed to scorn." It is the wisdom of this world to conceal the heart with deviousness, to veil one's thoughts with one's words, and to make what is false appear true and what is true appear false. On the other hand, it is the wisdom of virtue never to pretend anything for appearance's sake, and always to use words to express one's thoughts, to love the truth as it is and avoid what is false, to do what is right without reward and to be more willing to put up with evil than to perpetrate it, not to try to avenge a wrong, and to consider as a benefit any insult incurred for truth's sake. But this naivete is sneered at, because the virtue of innocence is considered foolishness by the wise people of this world. Anything that is done out of innocence they are certain to consider stupidity, and whatever truth approves of is in practice called foolishness by their worldly wisdom.

I hate the ways of falseness. Your words are a lantern which guides my steps; a light for the pathway in front of me.

Master, who will we go to? What you say is eternal life. Your words are a lantern which guides my steps; a light for the pathway in front of me.

*Prayer*

Dear Master, please guide the course of world events and give your Church the joy and peace of serving you in freedom. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



*First Reading*

*Job 13.13-14.6*

Job answered his friends in this way:

“Be quiet and let me speak,

and then let come on me what may come!

Why do I take my flesh between my teeth

and grasp my life in my hands?

Even if he slaughters me, I will trust him,

but even so, I will defend myself before him.

And he will be my rescue,

because a hypocrite could not appear before him.

So listen carefully to what I have to say

and give your ears to what I am asserting,

because now I have prepared my case,

and know that I will win my suit;

if anyone can make a counter-case against me,

then I will hold my tongue and die.

Only do not do two things to me

so that I will not run away from you and hide:

Take your hand off me

and do not let my dread of you overwhelm me.

Then call on me, and I will answer;  
     or let me speak first, and then you answer me.  
 What exactly are the faults and sins I committed?  
     Let me know my crimes and offenses.  
 Why are you hiding your face  
     and treating me as if I were an enemy?  
 Will you persecute a leaf driven back and forth by the wind?  
     Will you go after dry stubble?  
 You draw up bitter indictments against me  
     and punish me for faults back in my youth.  
 You put my feet in the stocks  
     and watch everywhere I walk  
     and dog my every footstep.  
 Man decays like meat rotting,  
     like a moth-eaten piece of clothing.  
 Man who is born from woman  
     has only a few days of life, and they are full of trouble.  
 He blossoms like a flower and then withers,  
     he flits away like a shadow and does not stay.  
 And would you bestow your glance on this kind of thing  
     and bring me up before you to pass judgment on?  
 Who can make an unclean thing clean?  
     No one!  
 Since his time of life has a limit  
     and the number of months he has here is up to you,  
 you have decided his limit, which he cannot pass;  
     so look away from him, and give him rest,  
     so that like a hired man, he can finish his day.

Master, please do not hide your face from me; lift the weight of your  
 hand off me, and do not let dread of you overwhelm me.

Dear God, reprimand me gently, not with anger, because your anger  
 will reduce me to nothing; and do not let dread of you overwhelm me.

*Second Reading*

*A Sermon by St. Zeno of Verona*

Is Job a forerunner of the Prince? If I am right, he is, and the  
 comparison will show the truth of my claim. But though Job was called

a virtuous man by God, God is himself the source of virtue from whom all the holy people drink. See what Scripture says: "The sun of virtue will rise for you." Job was called truthful, but the Master is, as he says in the Good News, "the way, and truth, and life." And while Job was rich, the Master is far richer, because "the earth belongs to the Master, and so does everything in it, as well as the inhabited world and everyone who lives there." All the rich man are his slaves, and so is the whole world and all of nature.

But we can compare Job and the Prince in many way: Just as Job was tempted by the devil three times, the Prince was also tempted three times. The Master set aside his riches out of love for us, and chose poverty for us to become rich, while Job lost everything he owned. A violent wind killed Job's sons, while the sons of God, the prophets, were killed by the rage of the Pharisees. Job became ulcerated and disfigured, while the Master, by becoming man, took on the defilement of the sins committed by all mankind. The wife of Job tempted him to sin, much as the synagogue tried to force the Master to yield to corrupt leadership. And in this way he was insulted by priests, the servants of his altar, just as Job was insulted by his friends. And just as Job sat on a dunghill full of worms, so all the evil of the world is really a dunghill which became the Master's home, while man that are full of every sort of crime and disgusting desire are really worms.

The restoration of riches and health to Job prefigures the resurrection, which gives health and eternal life to those who believe in the Prince. When he regained mastery over the whole world, the Prince says, "Everything has been given to me by my Father." And just as Job fathered other sons, the Prince did also, because the Emissaries, the sons of the Master, succeeded the prophets.

Job died happily and at peace, but there is no death for the Master. He is being praised forever, just as he was before time began, and he always will be, as time continues and moves into eternity.

Let us remove every encumbrance and run steadily on the race which we started, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the source of our faith and our goal.

Let us prove ourselves by patient endurance of troubles, in times of difficulty and hardship, and when we are whipped or imprisoned, keeping

our eyes fixed on Jesus, the source of our faith and its goal.

**Prayer**

Dear Master, please guide the course of world events and give your Church the joy and peace of serving you in freedom. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

# Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

*First Reading*

*Job 28.1-28*

Job said,  
Yes, there is a mine for silver  
and a place where gold is refined;  
iron is taken from the ground  
and copper is smelted from ore.  
The earth, though bread comes from it  
has underneath it fiery turmoil;  
its stones are the source of sapphires,  
and there is gold in its dirt.  
But where is wisdom to be found,  
and what is the place where understanding lies?  
Man knows nothing that is its equal,  
and it cannot be had in the land of the living.  
Solid gold cannot buy it,  
and it has no price in silver.  
It cannot be had with even with Ophirian gold  
or with priceless onyx or sapphires.  
Gold and crystal are no match for it,  
and golden implements are worthless in comparison;  
coral and jasper are not to be mentioned,  
and it is far beyond pearls and Arabian topaz.  
But then where does wisdom come from,  
and where is the place of understanding?  
It is hidden from the eyes of every beast,  
and invisible to the birds in the sky.  
No bird of prey knows how to find it,  
and no hawk's eye has seen the path to it.  
The proudest of beasts have not trampled it,



and lions have not even approached it.  
 The abyss says, "It is not down here,"  
 and the ocean says, "I do not have it."  
 Destruction and Death say,  
 "We have only heard tell of it."  
 God knows the way to it;  
 he is the one who is familiar with its place,  
 because he sees the ends of the earth  
 and observes all that is under the heavens.  
 He has set a boundary for darkness,  
 and pierces through to the farthest corners.  
 He sets his hand to flint and rocks  
 and overturns the mountains at their bases.  
 He splits channels into rocks;  
 his eyes gaze on everything of value.  
 He probes into the sources of streams,  
 and brings their hidden treasures to light.  
 He has weighed out the wind  
 and fixed the limits of the oceans.  
 When he made rules for rain  
 and a path for lightning bolts,  
 it was then he saw wisdom and assessed it,  
 gave it its setting, and knew it through and through.  
 And then he said to man:  
 "Hear this: fear of YHWH is wisdom,  
 and avoiding evil is understanding."

I am speaking of God's secret wisdom, that is hidden from human  
 beings, the wisdom which God planned for our glory before time began.  
 God has made us one thing with Prince Jesus and given us the Prince  
 to be our wisdom, the wisdom which God planned for our glory before  
 time began.

*Second Reading*

*The Confessions of St. Augustine*

"You are great, Master, and deserving our highest praise; your power  
 is immense, and there is no limit to your wisdom." Man, a tiny part of  
 your creation, wants to praise you. Though he carries his mortality about

with him as the evidence of his sin and the evidence that you “stand aloof from the arrogant,” still, this man, a tiny part of your creation, wants to praise you. It is you who motivate human beings to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.

Master, help me to know and understand what is the first impulse of a soul: to call on you for help, or to praise you—or if it must know you first before it can praise you. Of course, if someone does not know you, how can he call on you? That is, if he did not know you, he might call on someone else instead of you. Or must you first be called upon to be known? But Scripture says, “Unless they believe in him, how will they call upon him, and how are they to believe unless someone preaches to them?”

“Those who are looking for the Master will praise him.” If they look for the Master, they will find him; and when they find him, they will praise him. Master, let me look for you by calling upon you, and let me call upon you by believing in you, because you have been preached to us. Master, my faith calls upon you, a faith you have given me, a faith you inspired in me by the incarnation of your Son and through the service of the preacher.

How am I to call upon my God, my Master and my God? That is, when I call upon him, I am really calling him into myself; but where inside me can my God come? How can God who made heaven and earth come into me? Master, my God, is there anything in me that can hold you? Can heaven and earth, which you have made and in which you have made me, contain you? Or is it true that whatever exists contains you, since without you nothing would exist?

But since in fact I exist and yet would not exist unless you were in me, why am I asking you to come to me? I am not now in hell, and yet you are there—because the psalmist says, “If I go down into hell, you are there.” And so, my God, I would not exist at all unless you were in me; or rather, I would not exist unless I were in you “from whom and by whom and in whom everything exists.” Yes, Master, this is true.

Then what place am I calling you to come to, since I am in you? Or what place are you to come to me from? Where can I go beyond the edges of heaven and earth that my God can come to me, because he said, “I fill heaven and earth”?

What will help me find rest in you? Who will send you into my heart to make it drunk, so that I will forget my evil ways and embrace you, my only good? What are you to me? Please have mercy on me, so that I can speak. What am I to you that you command me to love you, and grow angry and threaten me with terrible punishment if I do not? Is it then only a little grief not to love you?

In your mercy, God my Master, please tell me what you are to me. “Say to my soul, ‘I am your rescue.’” Speak in such a way that I can hear you. My heart has turned its ears to you, Master; open them and tell my soul, “I am your rescue.” I will run after your voice and grasp hold of you; do not hide your face from me, please. Let me see your face, even if I die, because if I do not see it, I will die of longing.

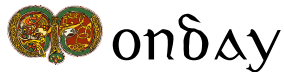
Who else do I have in heaven but you? With you, nothing on earth gives me pleasure, and though my body and my heart decay, God is my heart’s strength and my inheritance forever.

Please tell me, my God, “I am your rescue.” God is my heart’s strength and my inheritance forever.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since your love never fails, please listen to our call, keep us from danger, and provide for all our needs. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

#### Resume with the Te Deum



Monday

#### First Reading

*Job 29.1-10, 30.1, 9-23*

Job then continued his talk, and said,  
 “If only I were the way I was a few months ago,  
     during the time God watched over me,  
 when his lamp shone down on my head

and by his light I walked through darkness—  
as I was during the days of my prime,  
when the friendly shelter of God was over my tent,  
while the Omnipotent God was still with me,  
when my children surrounded me,  
and my steps were bathed in cream  
and the rocks poured streams of oil for me!  
When I went out to the city gates  
and took my seat in the open square,  
the young men would see me and draw back,  
and the older ones would stand and remain on their feet;  
the authorities stopped their talking  
and put their hands over their mouths,  
and the voices of the nobles became silent  
as their tongues stuck to the roofs of their mouths.  
But now, younger men than I make fun of me,  
men whose fathers I would have scorned  
to have tended my flocks with the dogs.  
Now I am the subject of their comic songs;  
yes, I am the butt of their jokes.  
They hate me; they keep far away from me  
and have no qualms about spitting in my face.  
Because God has unstrung my bow and tortured me,  
they allow themselves every liberty with me.  
The rabble come forward to block my way  
and try to make me trip;  
they pile up obstacles in my path  
and keep me from walking down it.  
They scheme at my destruction  
with no one to be my helper.  
They come at me in huge waves  
and roll over me like a devastating storm.  
They fill me full of terror  
as they blow my dignity away in their wind,  
after my prosperity vanished like a cloud.  
And now my soul has emptied itself in my distress,  
and this time of suffering has its grasp on me;

my bones are pierced inside me during the night,  
 and the pain gnaws at me and gives me no rest.  
 Someone hugely strong has pulled my clothes awry  
 and yanked me by the collar of my coat;  
 he threw me into the mud  
 and I have groveled down in dirt and ashes.  
 And I call out to you and you do not answer,  
 I stand up, and you merely look at me.  
 And you show me no mercy,  
 you slap me about with your mighty hand;  
 you throw me up for the wind to blow me about,  
 and have ruined everything I achieved;  
 and I know that you will bring me nothing but death  
 and send me to the place every living thing goes.

All night long my bones are racked with pain, a gnawing pain that never sleeps. God has thrown me into the mud where I grovel in the dirt and ashes.

Please spare me, Master, because my days are simply a breath. God has thrown me into the mud, where I grovel in the dirt and ashes.

*Second Reading*

*Teachings of St. Dorotheus*

Let us examine, my brothers, how it happens that often a person hears something unpleasant and it does not bother him, and he is as if he had not heard it, while on other occasions he is disturbed and troubled as soon as he hears these words. What is the cause of this inconsistency? Is there only one, or are there many of them? I recognize a number of them; but one in particular is the source of all the others. As someone put it: sometimes this results from the condition the person happens to be in.

If a person is engaged in prayer or contemplation, he can easily take a reprimand from his brother and be unmoved by it; on other occasions, affection for a brother is a strong reason, since love puts up with everything with the utmost patience. Another reason may be contempt; if a person despises the one who is trying to bother him and acts as if he were the most despicable of all creatures and considers it beneath his dignity even to look at him or answer him or mention the slight or the

insult to anyone else, he will not be bothered by what he says.

The result of this is, as I said, that no one is disturbed or troubled if he scorns and disregards what is said. On the other hand, it is also possible that a person will be disturbed and bothered by his brother's words, either because he is not in a good frame of mind, or because he hates his brother. There are a great number of other reasons as well; but the reason for all disturbance, if we look to its roots, is that no one finds fault with himself.

This is the source of all annoyance and distress. This is why we sometimes have no rest. We must not be surprised when we are reprimanded by holy men; we have no other peace but this.

We have seen that this is true in many cases, and in our laziness and desire for rest, we hope or believe that we have entered a straight path when we are impatient with everyone and yet cannot bear to blame ourselves.

This is the way we are. It does not matter how many virtues a man may have, even if they are beyond counting and limits. If he has turned from the path of self-accusation, he will never find peace. He will always be troubled himself, or else he will be a source of trouble for others, and all his labors will be a waste of time.

If we claim to be sinless, we are deceiving ourselves; but if we acknowledge our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us.

Whoever conceals his sins will not prosper; but if we acknowledge our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us.

#### Prayer

Father, since your love never fails, please listen to our call, keep us from danger, and provide for all our needs. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

I have made a contract with my eyes,

*Job 31.1-8, 13-23, 35-37*

so why would I look at a young girl?  
Yet what is my reward from God above me,  
and my inheritance from the Omnipotent One from heaven?  
Is it not supposed to be disaster for evil people,  
and calamity for those who do wrong?  
Then can he not see my conduct  
and count every step I take?  
If I have behaved deceitfully  
and if my feet hurried off to cheat others,  
have me weighed on honest scales  
so that God will know my honesty.  
If my steps wandered off the straight path  
or my heart followed my roving eyes,  
or if there is any dirt on my hands,  
then have someone else eat what I plant,  
and yes, pull up my crops.  
If I scorned the complaints of my servants or maids  
when they had a grievance against me,  
what would I do when God comes forward?  
How would I answer him when he punishes me?  
Did not the one who made me in the womb make them?  
Did not the same one form us inside our mothers?  
If I kept the poor from their ambitions,  
or had widows blind themselves with tears,  
or ate my dinner myself  
so that orphans went hungry—  
when in fact from my youth I reared them as if I were their father,  
and from my infancy I cared for the widows—  
if I have looked on people dying for lack of clothes,  
or seen any poor man with nothing to cover himself;  
if his heart did not bless me  
and he was not warmed by the fleece from my sheep;  
if I raised my hand to strike an orphan  
when I saw I had supporters at the city gate,  
then have my arm fall off at the shoulder—  
tear it out of its socket!  
But the dread of catastrophe from God is on me,

and his majesty overwhelms me!  
 If there were only someone to listen to my case!  
 Here is my brief.  
 If only the Omnipotent One would answer it!  
 If only my prosecutor would write out his indictment!  
 I would carry it on my shoulder  
 and wear it like a crown,  
 and I would show him every step I have taken  
 and approach him like a prince!

Does not calamity happen to evil people and disaster come upon those who do wrong? The Master's eyes are everywhere observing those who are evil and those who are good.

Does he not see my ways and count my steps? The Master's eyes are everywhere observing those who are evil and those who are good.

*Second Reading*

*Teachings of St. Dorotheus*

A man who finds fault with himself accepts everything cheerfully: misfortune, loss, disgrace, dishonor, and every other kind of hardship. He believes that he deserves all this, and nothing can disturb him; no one could be more at peace than this man.

But perhaps you will give me this objection: "Suppose my brother injures me, and when I examine myself I find that I have given him no reason for doing so. Why should I blame myself?"

What is certain is that if someone examines himself carefully and in fear of God, he will never find himself completely innocent. He will see that he has given some provocation by an action, a word, or by his manner. If he does find that he is not guilty in any of these ways, he must surely have injured that brother somehow at some other time. Or perhaps he has been a source of annoyance to some other brother; and for this reason, he deserves to endure the injury because of the many other sins he has committed on other occasions.

Another person asks why he should accuse himself when he was sitting in peace and quiet when a brother came upon him with an unkind or insulting word. He cannot tolerate it, and so he thinks that his anger is justified. If that brother had not approached him and said those words and upset him, he never would have sinned.



This kind of thinking is actually ridiculous, and has no rational basis. The mere fact that he said anything at all in this situation breaks the cover of the passionate anger inside him, which is all the more exposed by his excessive anxiety. If he wished, he could do penance; he has become like a clean, shiny grain of wheat that, when broken, is full of dirt inside.

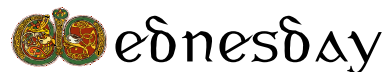
The man who thinks that he is quiet and peaceful has within him a passion that he does not see. A brother comes up, utters some unkind word, and immediately all the venom and mud that lie hidden within him are vomited out. If he wishes mercy, he must do penance, purify himself, and exert himself to become perfect. He will see that he should have responded by thanking his brother instead of returning the injury, because his brother has been an occasion of benefit to him. It will not be long before he will no longer be bothered by these temptations; the more perfect he grows, the less these temptations will affect him, because the more the soul advances, the stronger and more powerful it becomes in bearing the difficulties it meets.

In fact, I know that no man can survive as virtuous before God. Who am I to answer God and choose words against him?

God puts no trust in his holy ones, and even the heavens are not pure in his sight. Who am I to answer God and choose words against him?

#### Prayer

Father, since your love fails, please listen to our call, keep us from danger, and provide for all our needs. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

*Job 32.1-6, 33.1-22*

These three men stopped answering Job, because he considered himself virtuous. Then the anger of Elihu, son of Barachel the Buzite of the family of Ram, flared up. He was indignant that Job thought that he was right rather than God; and he was furious at his friends because they

had nothing to answer Job, even though they had condemned him. Elihu had postponed speaking to Job, because the others were older than he; but he became incensed when he found that they could not answer him; and so Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite gave his own answer:

“I am young and you are very old,  
 and that was why I held back and was afraid  
 and did not offer you my own opinion.  
 But please, Job, listen to what I have to say,  
 and pay attention to every word of mine,  
 because I am now opening my mouth  
 and letting the tongue in it speak.  
 My words come from an honest heart,  
 and my lips will utter frankly what I think.  
 God’s spirit made me,  
 and his omnipotent breath keeps me alive;  
 and if you can answer me,  
 marshal your arguments for your reply.  
 I am speaking to you before God,  
 and was made of the same clay as you;  
 and so there should be no fear of me to daunt you,  
 and my hand will not be heavy on you.  
 But you have said things in my hearing,  
 and I heard your words ring in my ear:  
 ‘I am pure, without violating God’s command;  
 I am innocent; there is not one wrong I have done—  
 and yet he keeps finding fault with me  
 and looks on me as his enemy;  
 he puts my feet in the stocks  
 and watches every move I make.’  
 Now here, in this, you are not virtuous,  
 and I will show this to you.  
 Because God is greater than any human being.  
 Why are you fighting with him?  
 He is not answerable for anything he says.  
 He may speak in different ways,  
 and human beings might not recognize some of them.  
 It might be in a dream, a vision during the night,

when deep sleep falls on me  
 as they rest in their beds;  
 and then he opens human ears  
 and his warning terrifies them  
 to turn men away from what they are doing  
 and keep pride away from them;  
 and so he holds back their souls from the pit  
 and keeps their lives from going to the grave.  
 Perhaps a man is punished with pain on his bed,  
 and strong aching seizes many of his bones,  
 so that his body cannot stand food  
 and his soul turns from the finest cuisine;  
 his flesh dwindles until it is invisible  
 and the bones that were hidden before stick out,  
 and his soul approaches the pit  
 and his life is given to death's servants."

How deep are the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his decisions!

Has anyone known the Master's mind or been able to give him advice? How unsearchable are his decisions!

*Second Reading Moral Reflections on Job by St. Gregory the Great*

"Listen, Job, to what I say and pay attention to all my words." The teaching of arrogant people has this characteristic: they do not know how to introduce their teaching humbly, and they cannot convey correctly to others the things they understand correctly themselves. They contradict what they teach with the words they use; they give the impression that they live on rarefied heights from which they look down scornfully on those they are teaching; they consider them as inferiors, and don't condescend to listen to them as they talk; in fact, they barely deign to talk to them at all; they simply lay down the law.

It was to this kind of teacher the Master says correctly through the prophet, "But you will rule them severely and with power." There is no doubt that people of this sort are prone not to correct their students with quiet reasoning, but to compel them to change by being rough and domineering, and to rule them with severity and power.

On the contrary, true teaching much more effectively shuns a tone of arrogance through reflection, in which it pursues the arrogant teacher himself with the arrows of its words. It ensures that the pride which it attacks in the hearts of those listening to the sacred words will not in fact be preached by arrogant conduct. That is, true teaching tries both to teach by words and demonstrate by living example—humility, which is the mother and mistress of virtues. Its goal is to express humility among the students of truth more by actions than words.

And so, when he was speaking to the Thessalonians, Paul ignores his own eminent dignity as an Emissary; he actually says, “We became like little children among you.” Similarly, the Emissary the Rock commands, “Always be prepared to satisfy everyone who asks a reason for the hope which is in you;” and by adding the words, “with a good conscience, speak gently and respectfully,” the Rock draws attention to the way in which sacred teaching should be conveyed.

When he tells his students, “Command and teach all this with total power,” Paul really recommends the credibility that goes hand in hand with good conduct rather than the domineering exercise of power. When one practices first and preaches afterwards, one is really teaching with power. Teaching loses credibility if conscience ties up the tongue. And so in the saying quoted above, Paul is not referring to the power of high-flown rhetoric but to the confidence elicited by good deeds.

It is also said of the Master, “He taught with authority, unlike the Scripture scholars and Pharisees.” He alone in a unique and sovereign way spoke from the power of his goodness, because no evil weakness led him into sin. That is, he had from the power of his own divine nature what he gave to us through the sinlessness of his human nature.

Dress yourselves in humility toward each other, because God resists the proud and gives his favor to the humble.

Learn from me, because I am gentle and humble of heart; because God resists the proud and gives his favor to the humble.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since your love never fails, please listen to our call and keep us from danger and provide for all our needs. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning

with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages.  
Amen.



## hursday

*First Reading*

*Job 38.1-30*

Then YHWH addressed Job out of a tornado, and said,  
 “Who is this who obfuscates my plans  
 with his ignorant blather?  
 Then get ready, like a man;  
 I will ask you questions, and you tell me the answers!  
 Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?  
 Tell me, if you know so much!  
 Who decided on its size?  
 You must know this!  
 Who laid out its measurements?  
 What does its foundation rest upon?  
 Who laid its cornerstone  
 when the morning stars sang in chorus,  
 and all God’s children sang for joy?  
 Who shut the sea inside its doors  
 when it gushed out of its womb,  
 when I made the clouds as clothes for it  
 and thick darkness its baby blanket—  
 when I set its limits  
 and put there bars and doors,  
 when I said,  
 ‘You may come this far, but no farther,  
 and here is where your proud waves stop.’  
 Have you given the morning orders since your life began  
 and shown the dawn its place  
 for taking hold of the ends of earth  
 and shaking evil men out of it?  
 The earth takes shape under it as clay does under a seal  
 and it takes color as clothes take dye;

while light is kept from immoral people  
 and arms raised in pride are broken.  
 Have you ever gone into the ocean's sources?  
 Have you walked down to the depths?  
 Have the gates of death been shown you,  
 or have you seen the entrance to the world beneath?  
 Have you fully understood the breadth of the earth?  
 Tell me, if you know all this.  
 What is the way to where light has its home,  
 and what is the place for darkness?  
 You must know it, because you were born back then  
 and the number of your years is enormous!  
 Have you entered the snow's warehouse  
 or seen the place where hail is stored,  
 hail I have reserved for times of trouble,  
 for days of battle and war?  
 How is light spread out,  
 or the east wind dispersed over the earth?  
 Who is it laid out the channels for the flowing water  
 or paths for lightning  
 to rain on uninhabited lands,  
 on the wilderness where no man lives  
 to enrich the desolate waste  
 and make the tender grass spring up?  
 Does rain have a father?  
 And who gave birth to dew?  
 Whose womb did ice emerge from,  
 and who is the mother of the frost from heaven,  
 when water congeals into stone  
 and the ocean's surface is frozen?

Who are you, a man, to argue with God? The pot has no right to say to  
 the potter, "why did you make this shape?"  
 Get ready like a man; I will ask you questions, and you are to answer  
 them. The pot has no right to say to the potter, "Why did you make this  
 shape?"

*Second Reading Moral Reflections on Job by St. Gregory the Great*

Since the daybreak or dawn changes gradually from darkness into light, the Church, which comprises the chosen people, is aptly called daybreak or dawn. While she is being led from the night of faithlessness to the light of faith, she is opened gradually to the splendor of heavenly brightness, in the same way as dawn yields to day after darkness.

The Song of Songs says appropriately, "Who is this who moves forward like the advancing dawn?" Holy Church, insofar as she keeps searching for the rewards of eternal life, has been called the dawn; while she turns her back on the darkness of sins, she begins to shine with the light of virtue.

This reference to the dawn conjures up a still more subtle consideration. The dawn intimates that the night is over, but it does not yet proclaim the full light of day. While it dispels darkness and welcomes light, it holds both of them mixed with each other, so to speak. Are not all of us who follow the truth in this life daybreak and dawn? While we do some things which already belong to light, we are not free from the remnants of darkness. In Scripture, the Prophet says to God, "No living thing is virtuous in your eyes." Scripture also says, "In many ways, all of us commit offenses."

When he writes, "The night has passed," Paul does not add, "The day is here," but "The day is near." Since he argues that after the night has passed, the day has not yet come but is nearby, he shows that the period before full daylight and after darkness is without doubt the dawn, and that he himself is living in that period.

It will be full day for the Community of the chosen people when she is no longer darkened by the shadow of sin. It will be full day for her when she shines with the perfect brilliance of interior light. This dawn is appropriately shown as an ongoing process when Scripture says, "And you showed the dawn its place." A thing which is shown its place is obviously called from one place to another; and what is the place of dawn but the perfect clarity of eternal vision?

When dawn has been brought there, it will retain nothing belonging to the darkness of night. When the psalmist writes, "My soul is thirsty for the living God; when will I go and see God's face?" does he not refer to the effort made by the dawn to reach its place? Paul was hurrying on to the place he knew the dawn would reach when he said he wished to die

and be with the Prince. He expressed the same idea when he said, “For me living is the Prince and death is a benefit.”

Whenever I think of you, I thank God. I am confident that the one who has begun the good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Jesus the Prince.

My prayer is that your love will grow more and more in both knowledge and insight. I am confident that the one who has begun the good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Jesus the Prince.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since your love never fails, please listen to our call and keep us from danger and provide for all our needs. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

*Job 40.1-14, 42.1-6*

YHWH added this to Job:

“Does the one fighting with Omnipotence want to correct him?

The man who reprimands God should have some answer!”

And then Job replied to YHWH,

“I know; I am a disgrace.

What answer can I give you?

I put my hand over my mouth.

I spoke once, but I will say no more;

I said two things, but that is the last of it.”

And YHWH again addressed Job from the tornado,

“Now then, get ready like a man.

I have questions for you to answer.

Would you nullify my decisions?

Would you condemn me to justify yourself?

Have you an arm like God’s?



Can you make the thunder his voice makes?  
 Then put on your majesty and splendor  
 and clothe yourself in glory and beauty.  
 Let loose the fury of your wrath  
 and bring down the proud with a glance;  
 cast your gaze on every snob, and drag him down low;  
 step on evil people and knock them down;  
 grind them all down together into the dirt;  
 tie their faces down in darkness;  
 and then I will grant  
 that your own hand can save you.”  
 Job’s answer was,  
 “I know that you can do everything,  
 and that nothing can thwart any purpose you have.  
 I have dealt with things I do not understand,  
 and so I spoke out of ignorance  
 about things beyond me, that I knew nothing about.  
 Please listen to me, and let me speak;  
 because you said you had questions for me to answer.  
 Now that I have heard you with my own ears  
 and seen you with my own eyes,  
 I am disgusted at myself,  
 and regret it all in dust and ashes.”

I have heard of you by word of mouth, Master; but now that I have seen  
 you for myself I disown everything I said and regret it all in dust and  
 ashes.

Though I have spoken once, I will not speak again; though I said  
 two things, I will say no more; I will put my finger on my lips. And I  
 regret it all in dust and ashes.

*Second Reading*

*A Sermon by Baldwin of Canterbury*

The Master knows the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. There  
 is no doubt that every one of them is known to him, while we know only  
 those he lets us read by the grace of discernment. The human spirit does  
 not know everything that is in a man, or all of the thoughts he has which  
 are voluntary and involuntary; man does not always perceive his thoughts

as they really are. Since he has clouded vision, he does not clearly discern things with his mind's eye.

Often a suggestion occurs to our mind under the guise of devotion, whether it comes from our own thoughts or from someone else or from the tempter, and in God's eyes we do not deserve any reward for our virtue; because there are some imitations of true virtues as well as vices which play tricks with the heart and dazzle the mind's vision. The result is that the appearance of goodness often seems to be in something which is evil, and in the same way evil seems to appear in something that is good. This is part of our miserable condition and ignorance, and it causes us anguish and anxiety.

It has been written, "There are paths which seem to a man to be right, but which in the end lead him to hell." To avoid this danger, St. John gives us these words of advice: "Test the spirits to see if they come from God." But no one can test spirits to see if they come from God unless God has given him discernment of spirits to enable him to investigate spiritual thoughts, inclinations, and intentions with honest and true judgment. Discernment is the mother of all the virtues; everyone needs it either to guide the lives of others, or to direct and reform his own life.

In the sphere of action, a right thought is one ruled by the will of God, and intentions are holy when they are directed singlemindedly toward him. In a word, we could see clearly through any action of ours, or into our entire lives, if we had a simple eye; a simple eye is an eye, and it is simple. This means that we see by correct thinking what is to be done, and by our good intention we carry it out with simple honesty, because deceitful action is wrong. Right thinking does not permit mistakes; a good intention rules out pretense. And so this is true discernment, a combination of right thinking and good intention.

Therefore, we must do all our actions in the light of discernment, as if they were done in God and in his presence.

The Master has told you, man, what is good; and this is what he expects of you: to do what is right, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Trust in the Master and do good, and you will possess the land. And this is what he expects of you: to do what is right, to love goodness, and

to walk humbly with your God.

**Prayer**

Dear Father, since your love never fails, please listen to our call, and keep us from danger and provide for all our needs. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



**First Reading**

*Job 42.7-17*

What happened after YHWH had said all this to Job, was that YHWH told Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not said what is right about me, as my slave Job has. And so now take seven bulls and seven rams, go to my slave Job and offer a holocaust for yourselves, and my slave Job will pray for you—and I will accept him, and not deal with you as your stupidity deserves, because you have not said what is right about me, as my slave Job has.”

So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as YHWH commanded, because YHWH had accepted the intercession of Job. And YHWH restored Job’s losses when he prayed for his friends; in fact, YHWH gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Then all his relatives and all his previous acquaintances came to him and dined with him in his house, and consoled him and gave him comfort for all the reverses YHWH had brought upon him. Each of them gave him a silver piece and a gold ring.

Then YHWH blessed Job’s final days more than the beginning; he now had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. He also had seven sons and three daughters, the first of whom he named Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third, Keren-Happuch. And through the whole land no women as beautiful as Job’s daughters could be found; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

After this, Job lived one hundred forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations; and then Job died, old and full of days.

The Master told Eliphaz, “You and your friends have not said what was right about me, as my slave Job has; he will pray for you.

I will listen to his prayer and forgive your stupidity in speaking against me; he will pray for you.

*Second Reading*

*Exposition on John by St. Thomas Aquinas*

The Prince himself is the way, and therefore he says, “I am the way.” This certainly is supremely right, because “through him we have access to the Father.”

Since this way is not separate from its end, and is joined to it, he adds, “truth and life;” and thus, he is himself both the way and the goal. In his human nature, he is the way, and in his divine nature he is the goal. Therefore, speaking as man, he says, “I am the way”; and speaking as God, he adds, “truth and life.” These two words are an apt description of this goal.

The reason is that this goal is the object of human desire, and a man desires two things more than anything else: In the first place, he wants to know the truth, which is peculiar to him; and secondly, he wants to continue to exist, which is common to everything. The Prince is the way by which we come to know truth, though he is also that truth: “Lead me, Master, in truth, and I will enter your way.” The Prince is also the way to come to life, though he is also that life: “You have made known the ways of life.”

Therefore, he designated the end of this way by truth and life, about which we have spoken above with reference to the Prince. First, he himself is life, “because life was in him”; then, he is truth, because he was “light for mankind,” and light is truth.

So if you are looking for the way by which you should go, take the Prince, because he is the way himself: “This is the way; walk in it.” And Augustine says, “Make man your way and you will arrive at God.” It is better to limp along the way than to stride off the way; because a man who limps along the way comes to the end of the way, even if he makes slow progress; but the more swiftly someone who is off the way runs, the

farther away he is from his goal.

If you are looking for a goal, hold fast to the Prince, because he is himself the truth, where we desire to be. "My mouth will reflect on the truth." If you are looking for a resting place, hold fast to the Prince, because he is himself life. "Anyone who finds me finds life, and receives rescue from the Master."

Therefore, hold fast to the Prince if you wish to be safe. You will not be able to go astray, because he is the way; one who remains with him does not wander in trackless places; he is on the right way. He also cannot be deceived, because he is truth, and he teaches every truth. And he says, "I was born for this and came into the world, to give evidence of the truth." Nor can he be disturbed, because he is both life and the giver of life. As he says, "I have come for them to have life, and to have it to the full."

The Master restored to Job twice as much as he had had before; and his relatives came and comforted him. The Master blessed Job in his last days more than he had at the beginning.

The Master is faithful; he will not allow you to have troubles that are beyond your strength; with every trial, he will also give you a way out of it. The Master blessed Job in his last days more than he had at the beginning.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since your love never fails, please listen to our call, and keep us from danger and provide for all our needs. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

# Tenth Sunday in ORDINARY TIME

*First Reading*

*Sirach 46.1-10*

Joshua, son of Nun, was a valiant leader,  
assistant to Moses in his prophetic role,  
developed, as his name implies  
to be the great savior of God's chosen people,  
to punish the enemy  
and to win back Israel's heritage.  
Consider the glory as he raised his arm  
to shake his javelin against the city.  
Who could withstand him  
as he fought YHWH's battles?  
Did he not stop the sun by his power,  
so that one day turned into two?  
He called upon the Supreme God  
when his enemies attacked from everywhere,  
and the Supreme God gave him his answer  
in hailstones full of enormous force  
which he rained down on the opposing army  
until he destroyed the enemy on the hillside,  
so that all the doomed nations would realize  
that YHWH was overseeing his people's fight.  
And because he was a devout follower of God,  
and because he showed his loyalty during Moses' life,  
he and Caleb, son of Jephunneh  
turned God's anger from his people  
when they opposed the rebel meeting,

and suppressed the evil complaint,  
 and because of this, were the only two spared  
 from the six thousand of the infantry  
 to lead the people into their heritage,  
 the land flowing with milk and honey.  
 The strength God gave to Caleb  
 stayed with him even in his old age,  
 until he won through to the summits of the land;  
 and his family also received an inheritance,  
 so that all the people of Jacob would know  
 how good it is to be a devout follower of YHWH.

He called on the Supreme God as his enemies pressed in on him from everywhere, and the great Master answered his prayer with a tremendous storm.

Who could withstand a man like this? Did he not stop the sun by his power; and the great Master answered his prayer with a tremendous storm.

*Second Reading      A Letter to the Romans by St. Ignatius of Antioch*

Ignatius, called Theophorus, to the community which has found mercy in the generosity of the Father above and of Prince Jesus, his only Son; to the community which is loved and illuminated by the Father, who wills everything that exists in accordance with the love of Prince Jesus our God; to the community which rules over the land of the Romans, a community worthy of God, and deserving of honor and praise, deserving to be called fortunate, deserving of having its prayers answered, a pure community, preeminent among Christian communities who observe the Prince's law and bear the Father's name. I send my regards to this community in the name of Prince Jesus, the Son of the Father; and I wish every blameless joy in Prince Jesus our Master to those who were in union, body and soul, with every command of his, and who are filled inalienably with the gifts of God and washed clean of every foreign stain.

I have been given the benefit, because of my prayers, of seeing you face to face, my sacred brothers, as I have in fact constantly asked. I now hope to embrace you as a prisoner in Prince Jesus, provided that it is

God's will for me to be found to deserve it to the end. A good start has been made; and I hope I will gain the favor of grasping my prize without any obstacle. You see, I am afraid that your love will be to my detriment; it is easy for you to do what you prefer, but it is hard for me to reach God if you were not to let me be martyred.

I would like you to please God, not human beings—as you *are* doing, in fact. I will never have another chance like this to reach God, and you will never have the credit for a greater achievement if you keep silent. If you keep silent about me, I become a statement about God; but if you love me materially, I become a meaningless shout. Do me only the favor of being made a sacrifice to God while there is still an altar ready, and in that you will become a choir of love and sing praise to the Father in Jesus the Prince for his kindness in summoning the Bishop of Syria from the east to the place where the sun sets. It will be a wonderful thing for me to set with the sun, and leave the world and go to God, so that I will be able to rise with him.

For me, life is the Prince, and death is a benefit; God forbid that I should take pride in anything except the cross of our Master Prince Jesus.

The world has been crucified to me through it, and I crucified to the world. God forbid that I should take pride in anything except the cross of our Master Prince Jesus.

#### Prayer

Dear God of wisdom and love, source of everything good, please send your Spirit to teach us your truth and guide our actions in your way of peace. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## Monday

#### First Reading

*Joshua 1.1-18*

What happened after the death of YHWH's slave Moses was that YHWH spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, and said, "My slave Moses is dead; and so come forward now and go over the Jordan



with all this people to the land I am giving to the descendants of Israel. I have given you every place the soles of your feet will step upon, as I told Moses. From the desert and this Lebanon as far as the great River Euphrates, from the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the west, will be your territory.

“No human being will be able to supplant you for your whole life; I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you. Be strong and brave, because you will divide among this people the land which I have sworn to their ancestors to give them as their inheritance. But be strong and very courageous, so that you will keep and act in accordance with the whole Law Moses imposed on you; do not turn away from it either to the right or the left, so that you will be successful in whatever you do. This Book of the Law is to be constantly in your mouth, and you are to meditate upon it day and night, so that you will be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it; and then your conduct will be successful and you will achieve your goals. Is it not I who have given you the command? Be strong and brave; do not be afraid or intimidated, because your God YHWH is with you wherever you go.”

Then Joshua gave this command to the officers of the people: “Go through the camp and issue these orders to the people: ‘Prepare provisions for yourselves, because in three days you will cross over the Jordan here to go in to take possession of the land which your God YHWH is giving you to own.’”

And Joshua said this to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half of the tribe of Manasseh: “Remember the command YHWH’s slave Moses gave you: ‘Your God YHWH is giving you rest and is ceding this land to you.’ Your wives and children and your livestock are to remain in the land Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan, but all of your brave fighting men are to go in front of your relatives armed and help them until YHWH has given your relatives a resting place, as he gave you, and they have taken possession of the land your God YHWH is giving them. Then you may return and occupy and enjoy the land with YHWH’s slave Moses gave you on this eastern side of the Jordan.”

They answered Joshua, “We will do everything you command, and will go wherever you send us. We will listen to you just as we listened to Moses in everything; only let your God YHWH be with you as he was

with Moses. Whoever rebels against your command and does not obey what you say in every order you issue will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”

The Master says, “I will be with you as I was with Moses. Be strong and courageous; you will lead my people to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Do not be afraid, because I am with you; I will never leave you or abandon you wherever you go. Be strong and courageous; you will lead my people to a land flowing with milk and honey.

*Second Reading Letter to the Romans, by St. Ignatius of Antioch*

You have never begrudged the martyrs their triumph; in fact, you trained them for it; and so I am asking you to be consistent with the lessons you teach them. Simply beg for me the courage and perseverance not only to say but to choose what is right, so that I will actually be a Christian and not merely be called one. That is, if I prove myself to be a Christian by martyrdom, then people will call me one, and my loyalty to the Prince will be apparent when the world no longer sees me.

Nothing that can be seen is really good. That is, our Master Prince Jesus, now that he has returned to his Father, has revealed himself more clearly; and our task is not one of producing persuasive propaganda, since Christianity shows its greatness when it is hated by the world.

I am writing to all the communities to report to all of them that I am glad to die for God, provided you do not stand in my way. I ask you please not to show me a misguided kindness; let me be food for beasts so that I can come to God. I am his wheat, and I will be ground by the beasts' teeth to become the Prince's pure bread.

I would rather have you urge the beasts on to become my tomb and leave no scrap of me behind; then when I have died, I will not be a burden to anyone. I will be a true student of the Prince when the world no longer sees my body; please pray to the Prince for me that I will in this way become a sacrifice to God. I am not giving you orders like the Rock and Paul; they were Emissaries, and I am a condemned criminal; they were free, and I am a slave. But if I suffer, I will become a freedman for Prince Jesus, and I will come back to life and to freedom in him.

But now as a prisoner, I am learning to give up my own desires. All

the way from Syria to Rome I have been fighting wild animals, on land and sea, day and night, since I am chained to ten leopards—I mean the detachment of soldiers guarding me. The better you treat them, the worse they become. I am more and more trained as a student by their ill-treatment of me, but “that does not make me virtuous.” I will be so happy with the animals they are preparing for me! I hope they will make short work of me; I will even coax them to eat me up quickly and not be afraid of touching me, as happens sometimes; in fact, if they hold back, I will force them to do it.

Bear with me, because I know what is good for me; I am now beginning to be a student. May nothing visible or invisible rob me of my prize, which is Prince Jesus! Fire, cross, packs of wild animals, whipping, tearing, wrenching my bones, mangling my limbs, crushing my whole body—all the horrible tortures of the devil—can come on me if I can only gain Prince Jesus.

I died to the law through the law to live for God; and the life I now live within this human body is lived now in faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.

I have been nailed with the Prince to the cross, and the life I live is not mine; the Prince lives in me, the one who loved me and gave himself up for me.

#### Prayer

Dear God of wisdom and love, and source of everything good, please send us your Spirit to teach us your truth and guide our actions to your way of peace. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## Tuesday

#### *First Reading*

*Joshua 2.1-24*

Then Joshua son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove as spies, and said, “Go, look over the land, especially Jericho.”

They left and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab, and

took up lodging there. A report was brought to the king of Jericho that men had come there that night from the descendants of Israel to spy out the country. So the king of Jericho sent a message to Rahab, which said, "Bring out the men who have come to you, because they are trying to spy out the country."

The woman took the two men and hid them, and then said, "Yes, the men did come to me, but I did not know where they were from; and what happened was that when the gate was being shut as it grew dark, the men went out, and where they went I do not know; but if you go after them quickly, you may overtake them." She had brought them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof. So the men went after them by the road to the fords of the Jordan; and as soon as those who were pursuing them had left, they shut the gate.

Then, before the Israelites had lain down for sleep, Rahab came up to them and said, "I know that YHWH has given you the land, and that we have been overcome with dread of you, and that everyone who lives in this land is in terror of you; because we heard how YHWH dried up the water in the Red Sea for you when you left Egypt, and how you completely destroyed the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og, who were on the other side of the Jordan. As soon as we heard this, our hearts melted, and no one has a shred of courage left because of you, since your God YHWH is the real God of heaven above and the earth below it. And so now I ask this favor: please, swear to me by YHWH, since I have shown kindness to you, that you will also show kindness to my father's house; and give me a true pledge that you will spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and preserve our lives from death."

The two men answered, "Our lives for yours. If none of you tell this business of ours, then when YHWH has given us this land, we will deal kindly and honestly with you."

Then she let them down from the window by a rope, because the house where she lived was on the city wall; and she said, "Go up to the mountain, or the ones who are after you might meet you. Hide there three days, until they have returned, and after that, you may go where you please."

The men answered, "We will not be responsible for keeping the oath

you made us swear unless when we come into this land you tie this scarlet cord in the window you let us down through, and unless you bring your father, mother, brothers, and sisters into your house. If anyone goes out the doors of your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head and we will not be responsible for it. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in this house, his blood will be on our head. And if you tell of this business of ours, we will be free from the oath you made us swear.”

She said, “I agree to what you said,” and sent them away, and they left. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

They went off up the mountain and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned; their pursuers had looked for them all along the way, but did not find them. Then the two men came back down the mountain, and crossed the Jordan, and came up to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him everything that had happened to them, adding to Joshua, “YHWH has given the land into our hands, because everyone who lives there is terrified of us.”

A man pleases God by actions and not by faith alone; Rahab pleased him when she sheltered the messengers and sent them on their way by a different route. Just as a body without breath is dead, faith without actions is dead.

By faith, Rahab the prostitute welcomed the spies with kindness and escaped death. Just as a body without breath is dead, faith without actions is dead.

*Second Reading Letter to the Romans by St. Ignatius of Antioch*

The pleasures of this world and all its kingdoms are useless to me; I would rather die in Prince Jesus than rule over the whole earth. I am searching for the one who died for us; my desire is for the one who came back to life for us. I am in labor and in the process of being born again; and so bear with me, brothers and sisters. Do not keep me from living; do not wish me to die. I want to belong to God; do not tempt me with things that are temporary; let me see the pure light, and when I am there, I will finally be a real man. Let me imitate the sufferings of my God. If anyone has God inside him, he should understand what I want and have sympathy with me, knowing what drives me onward.

The ruler of this world would drag me away and destroy my desire to be with God; so none of you who is going to be there should give him help. Stay on my side, or rather, with God. Do not have Prince Jesus on your lips and the world in your hearts; do not let envy have any place among you.

And if, when I get there, I beg for your intervention, pay no attention to me; believe what I am now writing to you instead—because I am writing to you while I am still alive, even though I long for death. My earthly desires have been crucified, and there no longer burns in me the desire for anything perishable; living water speaks inside me and says, “Come to the Father.”

I do not enjoy food that decays or the pleasures of this life. I want God’s bread, the meat of the body of Prince Jesus, who was David’s descendant, and for drink I want his blood, the sign of his imperishable love. I no longer wish to live the life that human beings value; and I will have my way, if you permit it. So permit it, please, so that you too will have God’s favor.

With these few words, I beg you to please believe me; Prince Jesus will make plain to you the truth of what I am saying, because he is the true voice that speaks the Father’s truth. Pray for me to reach my goal. I have written to you prompted by God’s purpose for me, not by merely human feelings and ideals; if I am to suffer, it will be because you loved me well; if I am rejected, it will be because you hated me.

Please remember the community in Syria in your prayers; it now has God for its shepherd instead of me. Prince Jesus alone will be its bishop, along with your love. As for myself, I am embarrassed to be included among its members, since I am the most insignificant of all of them, and was born at the wrong time. Still, if I reach God, I will be something by his mercy. I send you my regards from my heart, and so do the communities that have welcomed me in love as a representative of Prince Jesus and not a mere passerby. Yes, even the communities that were not on my material route but were on the same spiritual journey were there to meet me in city after city.

I am glad to suffer. In my own body I do all I can to fill up what has still to be endured by the Prince for the sake of his body, the Church.

It is for this I struggle and press on, with the Prince’s power working

in me to make me strong. In my own body I do all I can to fill up what has still to be endured by the Prince for the sake of his body, the Church.

### Prayer

Dear God of wisdom and love and source of everything good, please send us your Spirit to teach us your truth and guide our actions in your way of peace. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## Wednesday

### First Reading

*Joshua 3.1-17, 4.14-19, 5.10-12*

Joshua then rose early in the morning, and the descendants of Israel set out from Acacia Grove and arrived at the Jordan, where they camped in preparation for crossing over. After three days, officers went through the camp with the following orders: “When you see the Coffe containing your God YHWH’s Treaty, with all the priests and Levites bearing it move, you are to start out and follow it. You are to leave about a thousand cubits between you and it; do not come near it, or you will not know which way to go, since you have not been in this land before.”

Joshua then told the people, “Purify yourselves, because tomorrow YHWH will perform miracles for you.” He then said to the priests, “You will pick up the Coffe containing the Treaty and cross over ahead of the people.”

Then YHWH told Joshua, “Today I will begin to elevate you in the sight of all of Israel, so that they will know that I will be with you as I was with Moses. You are to give these orders to the priests carrying the Coffe containing the Treaty: ‘When you come to the water’s edge, you are to halt.’”

So Joshua said to the Israel’s descendants, “Come to me and listen to what was said by your God YHWH.” He continued, “This is how you will know that the living God is among you, and that he will not fail to drive out in front of you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites: You see that the Coffe containing the Treaty with the Master of the whole earth is about to cross over the

Jordan in front of you. Now select twelve men, one from every tribe of Israel; and as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests carrying the Coffe of YHWH, Master of the whole earth, touch the Jordan, the water that comes down from upstream will stop flowing, and will pile up in a heap.”

And this is what happened when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, with the priests carrying the Coffe of the Treaty in front of them: as soon as those who were carrying the Coffe came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the Coffe touched the edge of the water (since the Jordan overflows its banks at harvest-time), the water that came from upstream stopped and rose in a heap all the way back to Adam, a city beside Zaretan. The water that flowed down to the Salt Sea of Arabah dried up and stopped; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho.

While they were crossing, the priests carrying the Coffe stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan until all the people had crossed over it.

On that day, YHWH elevated Joshua in the eyes of all Israel, and they held him in as much reverence as they had Moses, for his whole life.

Then YHWH told Joshua, “Order the priests carrying the Coffe of the Treaty to come up out of the Jordan,” and so Joshua commanded the priests, “come up out of the Jordan.” And when the priests carrying the Coffe of YHWH’s treaty came out of the middle of the Jordan and the soles of their feet touched dry land, the water of the Jordan returned to its place and overflowed its banks as before.

The descendants of Israel then made camp in Gilgal and kept the Passover on the fourteenth of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. And they ate from the yield of the land on the day after the Passover, and made unleavened bread and parched grain on that same day. The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the yield of the land; and the descendants of Israel no longer had manna, and ate the food from the land of Canaan that year.

Israel crossed the Jordan on dry land, because God dried up its water just as in the past he had dried up the water of the Red Sea, so that all the peoples of the earth would know that the hand of the Master is a



powerful one.

What happened that the sea ran away and the Jordan turned back on itself? It was so that all the peoples of the earth would know that the hand of the Master is a powerful one.

*Second Reading*

*A homily on Joshua by Origen*

The Coffers of the Treaty led the people of God across the Jordan; the priests and Levites halted, and the water, as though out of reverence for the servants of God, stopped flowing. They piled up in a single mass, and so allowed the people of God to cross in safety.

As a Christian, you should not be amazed to hear of these miracles performed for men of the past. The divine Word promises much greater and more elevated things to those of you who have passed through the Jordan water by the sacrament of the Bath; he promises you a passage even through the sky. Listen to what Paul says about the virtuous: "We will be caught up into the clouds to meet the Prince in the air, and so we will always be with the Master." There is absolutely nothing for a virtuous man to be afraid of; the whole of creation is his slave. Listen to another promise that God makes to him through the prophet: "If you pass through fire, the flame will not burn you, because I am the Master, your God." A virtuous man is welcome everywhere, and everything gives him the appropriate service.

So you must not think that these events belong only to the past, and that those of you now listening to the report of them do not experience anything of the kind. It is in you that they all find their spiritual fulfillment. You have recently abandoned the darkness of idolatry, and you now desire to come and hear the divine law. This is your departure from Egypt. When you became a catechumen and began to obey the Church's laws, you passed through the Red Sea; now at the various stops in the desert, you give time every day to hear the law of God and see the face of Moses unveiled by the glory of God. But once you come to the font for the Bath, and in the presence of priests and deacons are initiated into those sacred, august mysteries which are only known to those who have the right to know them, then through the ministry of the priests, you will cross the Jordan and enter the promised land. There Moses will hand you over to Jesus, and he will himself be your guide on your new journey.

And so, as you remember all the mighty deeds God performed, and recall that he divided the sea for you and held back the water in the river, you will turn to them and say, “Why did you run away, sea? Why did you turn back, Jordan? Why, mountains, did you skip like rams, and hills, did you leap like little sheep?” And the Master’s word will answer, “The earth shakes at the Master’s face, at the face of Jacob’s God, who turns stones into a pool and rock into a fountain.”

Your decisions are great, Master, and beyond all describing. You have elevated your people and made them glorious.

You made a road through the sea and a path through deep water. You have elevated your people and made them glorious.

#### Prayer

Dear God of wisdom and love, and source of everything good, please send your Spirit to teach us your truth and guide our actions in your way of peace. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

*Joshua 5.13-6.21*

Then, when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man facing him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went over to him and said, “Friend or enemy?” and he answered, “Neither; I have come to command YHWH’s army.” And Joshua fell prostrate in worship, and then said, “What has my master to say to his slave?”

The Commander of YHWH’s army answered, “Take your sandals off, because the place you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did as he was told.

Jericho was battened up for siege because of the descendants of Israel; no one left or entered. YHWH then said to Joshua, “Now I am handing Jericho over to you with its king and warriors. Your whole army is to march around the city once a day for six days, with seven priests

blowing rams' horns in front of the Coffèr. On the seventh day, you are to march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the horns; and when you hear them give a long blast with the horns, you are to raise a huge shout, and the city wall will collapse, and the people are then to rush ahead."

Joshua son of Nun then called the priests and told them, "Take the Coffèr of the Treaty and have seven priests carry a ram's horn each in front of the Coffèr." He told the people, "Advance, and march round the city, with the armed men marching in front of YHWH's Coffèr."

When Joshua finished speaking to the people, the seven priests with the rams' horns in front of YHWH marched forward and blew their horns, and the Coffèr of YHWH's Treaty followed them, as the priests continued blowing the horns. Joshua had given these orders to the people, "You are not to shout or make any outcry or say a word until the time I tell you to shout; and then shout out!" So he had YHWH's Coffèr circle the city once, after which they returned to camp.

The next morning, Joshua rose early and had the priests take up YHWH's Coffèr; and seven priests with rams' horns marched out and blew their horns, with the armed men in front of them, and the rear guard behind YHWH's Coffèr, as the priests continued blowing their horns. This was the second day they marched once around the city and returned to camp; and they did the same for six days.

On the seventh day, they rose early, about dawn, and marched seven times around the city in the same way; that was the only day they marched around it seven times; and on the seventh time, when the priests blew their horns, Joshua told the people, "Raise a shout, because YHWH has given you the city! The city has been slated by YHWH for destruction with everything in it, except the prostitute Rahab, who is to live along with everyone in her house with her, because she hid the messengers we sent. And you are to be very careful to keep away from defiled things, or you will be defiled in taking them and bring a curse on the camp and cause it misery. All the silver, gold, and the bronze and iron utensils are sacred to YHWH, and are to be put into YHWH's treasury."

Then the people gave a great shout when they heard the priests blowing the horns, and the wall collapsed; and then the people advanced into the city and took it over. And they completely destroyed with their swords everything in the city, men, women, young, old, oxen, sheep, and

donkeys.

Master, you are my God; I will tell how great you are and praise your name. You have reduced the city to a heap of stones, never to be rebuilt.

After seven days' procession around Jericho's walls, Israel's faith brought them down in ruins. You have reduced the city to a heap of stones, never to be rebuilt.

*Second Reading*

*A Homily on Joshua by Origen*

Once Jericho was surrounded it had to be stormed; but how was Jericho stormed? No sword was drawn against it, no battering ram aimed at it, no javelins thrown. The priests merely sounded their trumpets, and the walls of Jericho collapsed.

In the Scriptures, Jericho is often depicted as an image of the world. There can be no doubt that the man the Good News describes as going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and falling into the hands of robbers is an image of Adam being driven out of paradise into the exile of this world. In the same way, the blind men in Jericho, to whom Jesus came to give sight, signified the people in this world who were blinded by ignorance, and were the ones to whom the Son of God came.

Jericho will fall, then; this world will disappear. In fact, in the sacred books the end of the world was announced long ago. How will the world be brought to an end, and what are the means by which it will be destroyed? The answer of Scripture is, "by the sound of trumpets." If you ask what trumpets, then let Paul reveal the secret; listen to what he says: "The trumpet will sound and the dead who are in the Prince will come back to life incorruptible. The voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God will give the signal, and the Master himself will come down from heaven." Then Master Jesus will conquer Jericho with trumpets and destroy it, saving only the prostitute and her household.

Our Master Jesus "will come," says Paul, and he will come with the sound of trumpets. He will save only the woman who took in his spies; that is, his Emissaries, in faith and obedience, and hid them on the roof of her house; and he will join this prostitute to the family of Israel. But we should not bring up her past sins again or impute them to her; she was a prostitute once, but now she is wedded to the Prince as a chaste virgin to one chaste husband. Listen to what the Emissary says of her:

“He has determined to present you to the Prince as a chaste virgin to her one and only husband.” In fact, Paul had been born from her himself: “Misled by our stupidity and disbelief,” he said, “we too were once slaves to our emotions and to pleasures of every kind.”

If you want to learn more fully about how this prostitute stopped being a prostitute, then listen to Paul again: “And this is what you were too, but you have been washed clean and made holy in the name of our Master Prince Jesus and in the Spirit of our God.” To assure her escape when Jericho was destroyed, the prostitute was given that supremely effective symbol of rescue, a scarlet cord; because it is by the blood of the Prince that the entire Church is saved, in the same Prince Jesus our Master, to whom belongs glory and dominion through all the ages of ages. Amen.

Now I will lift my hand up to the nations and raise my signal to the peoples; and all mankind will know that I, the Master, am your savior, your redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.

When you have lifted up the Son of Man off the earth, you will know what I AM, and all mankind will know that I, the Master, am your savior, your redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.

#### Prayer

God of wisdom and love, since you are the source of everything good, please send your Spirit to teach us your truth and guide our actions in your way of peace. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### *First Reading*

*Joshua 10.1-14, 11.15-17*

Adonizedek, the king of Jerusalem, heard how Joshua had taken Ai and completely devastated it, and had done to Ai and its king what he had done to Jericho and its king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and had stayed among them, and that people

everywhere were terrified, because Gibeon was large enough to be a royal city, greater than Ai, and all of its men were powerful. So Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, sent for Hoham, king of Hebron, Piram, king of Jarmuth, Haphia, king of Lachish, and Debir, king of Eglon, to come to join him in attack on Gibeon, because it had made peace with Joshua and the Israelites; these five Amorite kings, of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, united all their forces and marched against Gibeon, where they took up siege positions.

At this, the men of Gibeon sent this appeal to Joshua in his camp at Gilgal: “Do not abandon your servants; please come quickly and save us. Help us, because all the Amorite kings of the mountain country have united against us.”

Joshua then marched from Gilgal with select troops and the rest of his soldiers; and YHWH told Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them; I have handed them over to you, and not one of them will be able to stand up against you.” Joshua made a surprise attack on them after an all-night march from Gilgal, and YHWH routed them before him. The Israelites slaughtered them savagely at Gibeon and pursued them down the hillsides of Beth-horon, and kept making casualties as far as Azekah and Makkedah.

And during their retreat before Israel along the descent from Beth-horon, YHWH rained down huge stones from the sky above them all the way to Azekah, and killed many of them. More died from these hailstones than the descendants of Israel killed with their swords.

Then on the day when YHWH handed the Amorites over to the descendants of Israel,

Joshua prayed to YHWH

and said in the presence of Israel,

“Stand still, sun, over Gibeon,

and moon, stop in the valley of Aijalon.”

And the sun stood still

and the moon stopped,

while the nation took its vengeance on its enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and did not resume its swift course for a whole day. Never before or since was there a day like this, when YHWH obeyed the voice of a man, because YHWH was fighting for Israel. Moses com-

manded Joshua in the same way that YHWH had commanded his slave Moses, and Joshua acted as ordered; he left nothing undone that YHWH commanded.

Joshua then captured all this land: the mountain regions, the whole of the Negeb, all the land of Goshen, the foothills, the Arabah, as well as the mountain regions and foothills of Israel, from Mount Halak that rises toward Seir as far as Baal-gad in the Lebanon valley at the foot of Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and executed them.

I will assemble them from foreign lands and lead them back to their own country, and they will graze where streams of clear water flow, and in every inhabited place in the land.

I will give my sheep pasture myself, and I myself will find rest for them. And they will graze where streams of clear water flow, and in every inhabited place in the land.

*Second Reading*

*Explanations of the Psalms by St. Ambrose*

Even though everything in Scripture is fragrant with God's grace, the book of Psalms is especially attractive.

Moses wrote the history of Israel's ancestors in prose; but after leading people through the Red Sea—a miracle that stayed in their memory—he broke into a song of triumph when he saw King Pharaoh drowned along with his forces. His genius soared to a higher level, to match an accomplishment beyond his own powers.

Miriam too took up her tambourine and sang encouragement for the rest of the women, and said, "Let us sing to YHWH, because he has become gloriously triumphant; he has driven horses and their riders into the ocean!"

There is benefit for everyone in the book of Psalms, with healing power for our rescue. There is instruction from history, and education from the Law, prediction from prophesy, chastening from censure, and persuasion from moral teaching. Everyone who reads it can find a cure for his own individual failings. Everyone with eyes to see can discover in it a complete gymnasium for the soul, a stadium for all the virtues, equipped for every kind of exercise; it is each person's task to choose the kind of exercise he judges best to help him gain his victory-crown.

If you want to read about the actions of the past and imitate them,

you will find the whole history of the Israelites in a single psalm; in one short reading, you can collect a treasure for your memory. If you want to study the power of the Law, which is summed up in the ties of love (“Anyone who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law.”), you can read in the psalms about the great love with which one man faced serious dangers single-handed to remove the shame of the whole people. You will find the glory of love more than a match for the trappings of power.

And what should I say about the gift of prophesy? We can see that what others hinted at in riddles was promised openly and clearly only to the psalmist: the Master Jesus was to be born from his descendants, as the Master promised him, “I will place on your throne a person who is the harvest of your body.”

In the psalms, then, not only is Jesus born for us, he also undergoes his saving suffering in his body, he lies down in death and comes back to life again, he rises up into the sky, and sits enthroned beside his Father. What no human being would have dared to say was foretold by the psalmist alone, and afterward proclaimed by the Master himself in the Good News.

My heart is firm, my God, my heart is firm; I will sing a psalm to you.

Wake up, lyre and harp; I will awaken the dawn; I will sing a psalm to you.

#### Prayer

Dear God of wisdom and love, source of everything good, please send your Spirit to teach us your truth and guide our actions in your way of peace. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### *First Reading*

*Joshua 24.1-7, 13-28*

Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem, and called into his presence their elders, leaders, judges, and officers; and when they stood in formation before God, Joshua gave this address to all the



people: “This is what is said by YHWH, the God of Israel: ‘In times gone by, your ancestors, down to Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the river and served other gods. But I brought your father Abraham from the region beyond the river and led him through the whole land of Canaan. I made his descendants numerous, and gave him Isaac, and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I assigned the mountain region of Seir to Esau to settle in, while Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.

“I then sent Moses and Aaron, and struck Egypt with the miracles I worked among the Egyptians; and afterward, I led you out of Egypt, and when you reached the sea, the Egyptians pursued your ancestors to the Red Sea with chariots and horsemen; but because your people called out to YHWH, he put darkness between them and the Egyptians, on whom he brought the sea to drown them. You saw what I did in Egypt, and lived a long time in the desert.

“I then gave you a land you had not plowed and cities you had not built to live in; you have eaten from vineyards and olive groves you did not plant.’

“And so now, show respect for YHWH and serve him completely and sincerely. Throw away the gods your ancestors served beyond the river and in Egypt, and serve YHWH. If you are not willing to serve YHWH, decide today who you will serve: the gods your ancestors served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose country you are now living. As far as I and my family are concerned, we will serve YHWH.”

Then the people shouted back, “Far be it from us to abandon YHWH to serve other gods! It was our God YHWH who brought us and our ancestors up out of the land of Egypt and bondage. He performed those great miracles before our very eyes and protected us along our whole journey and among all the peoples we passed through. As we came up, YHWH would drive out all the peoples, including the Amorites who lived in the land; and so we will also serve YHWH, because he is our God.”

Joshua then gave this reply to the people: “You may not be able to serve YHWH, because he is a holy God; he is a jealous God, who will not forgive your disobedience or your sins. If you abandon YHWH after all the good he has done for you and serve foreign gods, he will do you harm and destroy you.”

The people answered Joshua, "We will serve YHWH anyway." and Joshua told the people, "You are witnesses that you have chosen to serve YHWH." They answered, "Yes, we are!"

"Then throw away the foreign gods you have among you now, and turn your hearts to YHWH, the God of Israel." Then the people promised Joshua, "We will serve our God YHWH, and obey what he says."

So Joshua made an Treaty with the people that day and laid down rules and regulations for them at Shechem, which he recorded in the book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was in YHWH's holy place; and Joshua told all the people, "This stone will be our witness, because it heard all the words YHWH spoke to us; it will be a witness against you if you wish to reject your God." Joshua then dismissed the people for each to go into his own inheritance.

Far be it from us to turn from the Master to serve other gods; we will serve our God the Master and obey what he says.

Even though there are other things called "gods" in the sky or on the earth, for us there is one God; we will serve our God the Master and obey what he says.

*Second Reading*

*Explanations of the Psalms by St. Ambrose*

Is there anything more enjoyable than a psalm? David expresses it well: "Praise the Master, because a song of praise is a good thing; there should be praise of our God with joy and pleasure." Yes, a psalm is a blessing on the lips of the people, a hymn in praise of God, the community's homage, a general shout of approval, a word that speaks for everyone, the voice of the Church, and an acknowledgement of the faith in song. It is the voice of complete agreement, the joy of freedom, a cry of happiness, and the echo of gladness. It soothes the temper, distracts from care, and lightens the burden of sorrow; it is a source of security at night, and a lesson in wisdom during the day. It is a shield when we are afraid, a celebration of holiness, a vision of serenity, and a promise of peace and harmony; it is like a lyre, evoking harmony from the blending of its tones. Day begins to the music of a psalm; day closes to the echo of a psalm.

In a psalm, instruction competes with beauty. We sing for pleasure; we learn for our benefit. And is there any experience that is not covered by a reading of the psalms? I come across the words, “A song for the lover,” and I am set aflame with desire for God’s love; I go through God’s revelation in all its beauty, the intimations of resurrection, and the gifts of his promise. I learn to avoid sin. I see my mistake in feeling ashamed of my repentance for my sins.

What is a psalm but a musical instrument to give expression to all the virtues? The ancient psalmist used it, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to make the earth reecho the music of heaven; he used the dead gut of the strings to create harmony from a variety of notes, so that he could send heaven the song of God’s praise. In doing so, he taught us that we are first to die to sin, and then create in our lives on earth a harmony through virtuous actions, if the grace of our devotion is to reach up to the Master.

David taught us in this way that we should sing an interior song of praise, like St. Paul, who tells us, “I will pray in spirit, and also with understanding; I will sing in spirit, and also with understanding.” We must form our lives and shape our actions in the light of the things that are above us; we must not allow pleasure to awaken bodily emotions, which weigh down our soul instead of freeing it. The holy prophet told us that his songs of praise were to celebrate the freeing of his soul, when he said, “I will sing to you, my God, with a lyre, Holy One of Israel; my lips will take pleasure in singing to you, and so will my soul, which you have set free.”

It is good to show gratitude to the Master, and to sing to your name, Supreme Being; it is good to thank you with a ten-stringed lyre and a lute and to sing to the melody of a harp; to sing to your name, Supreme Being.

#### Prayer

Dear God of wisdom and love, source of everything good, please send your Spirit to teach us your truth and guide our actions in your way of peace. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



# Eleventh Sunday In Ordinary Time

*First Reading*

*Judges 2.6-3.4*

After Joshua had dismissed the people, each of the descendants of Israel left to take possession of the land he had inherited; and the people served YHWH during the entire lifetime of Joshua as well as of those elders who had outlived Joshua and seen all the great deeds YHWH had done for Israel.

Joshua, son of Nun, YHWH's slave, was a hundred ten years old when he died; and he was buried within the borders of his inheritance Timnath-heres in the mountain region of Ephraim north of Mount Gaash.

Once, however, the rest of that generation went to join their ancestors and there came up a later generation that had not known YHWH or what he had done for Israel, the descendants of Israel offended YHWH by serving the Baals. They abandoned YHWH, the God of their ancestors, who had led them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods of the various nations around them, and by their worship of these gods, they antagonized YHWH.

And because they had left him in this way and served Baal and the Astartes, YHWH's anger took fire against Israel, and he handed them over to looters, who took away what they had. He allowed them to fall into the power of the enemies in the environs; and they were no longer able to withstand them; YHWH turned whatever they undertook into disaster for them, as he had sworn he would do in his warning to them; and they were in severe trouble.

Even when YHWH brought judges forward to save them from the power of those who were looting them, they did not listen to the judges, and gave themselves over to the worship of other gods. They were quick

to wander off the path their ancestors had taken, and did not follow their example of obedience to YHWH's commandments. Whenever YHWH brought judges forward for them, he would be with the judge and save them from the power of their enemies as long as the judge lived, and in so doing showed pity for their anguished cries of distress under their oppressors; but when the judge died, they would relapse and do worse than their fathers in following other gods in service and worship, and would leave off none of their evil practices or stubborn conduct.

In his anger toward Israel, YHWH said, "Since this nation has violated the Treaty I concluded with their ancestors and has disobeyed me, I will now not clear away for them any more of the nations which Joshua left when he died." The descendants of Israel were made to prove through these nations whether or not they would stay on YHWH's path and continue walking on it as their ancestors had done; and so YHWH allowed these nations to remain instead of driving them out immediately or subjecting them to the power of Israel.

The following are the nations that YHWH allowed to remain so as to test all those descendants of Israel who had no experience of the battles with Canaan—simply to teach and train in battle only those generations of the descendants of Israel who would not have had that previous experience: the five masters of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who live in the mountain region of Lebanon between Baal-hermon and the entrance to Hamath. These people were used to test Israel, to find out whether they would obey the commandments YHWH had imposed on their fathers through Moses.

The Master grew angry with his people and subjected them to the power of the nations; yet when he heard them call out, he looked with pity on their troubles.

The Master brought forward judges who rescued them from their looters; when he heard them call out, he looked with pity on their troubles.

*Second Reading      A Treatise on the Master's Prayer, by St. Cyprian*

When we pray, our words should be calm, modest, and restrained. Let us reflect that we are standing in the presence of God; we should please him both by our bodily posture and our manner of speaking. It is

characteristic of the vulgar to shout and make noise, not of those who are refined; they should employ a quiet tone in their prayer.

In addition, in the course of his teaching, the Master instructed us to pray in private; hidden and secluded places, even our own rooms, give evidence to our belief that God is everywhere, and that he sees and hears everything, that in the totality of his majesty, he penetrates hidden and secret places. This is the teaching of Jeremiah: "Am I God when I am nearby and not God when I am far away? Can anyone hide in a dark corner without my seeing him? Do I not fill heaven and earth?" Another passage of Scripture says, "The Master's eyes are everywhere, as he observes good and evil men alike."

The same refinement and restraint should characterize our liturgical prayer also; when we gather to celebrate the divine mysteries with God's priest, we should not express our prayer in rowdy words; the plea that should be made to God with restraint is not to be shouted noisily or long-windedly. God hears our heart, not our voice; he sees our thoughts, and is not to be shouted at. The Master showed us this when he asked, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" The Book of Revelation gives evidence of this also: "And all the communities will know that I am the one who searches hearts and minds."

Anna kept this rule, and in her observance of it, she is an image of the Church. In the First Book of Samuel, we are told that she prayed quietly and in a refined way to God in the recesses of her heart; her prayer was secret, but her faith was evident. She did not pray with her voice, but with her heart, because she knew that in this way the Master would listen to her. She prayed with faith and received what she was looking for. Scripture makes this clear in the words, "She was speaking in her heart; her lips were moving, but her voice could not be heard; and the Master listened to her prayer." The psalmist also reminds us, "Ponder it in your hearts, and express your remorse in the privacy of your room." This is the teaching of the Holy Spirit; through Jeremiah, he suggests this: "Say in your hearts, 'Master, you are the one we are to worship.'"

My friends, anyone who worships should remember the way in which the tax-collector prayed in the Temple together with the Pharisee; he did not raise his eyes vulgarly to heaven or lift up his hands arrogantly; he struck his breast and confessed the sins hidden within his heart, and begged the assistance of God's mercy. While the Pharisee was pleased

with himself, the tax-collector deserved much more to be washed clean, because of the way in which he prayed; he did not place his hope of rescue in the certainty of his own innocence—because in fact, no one is innocent. No, he prayed humbly, and confessed his sins; and the Master who forgives those who are humble listened to his prayer.

Let us consider how we should live in the presence of God and his angels; and so let us stand singing psalms in such a way that mind and voice are in harmony.

We should recall that God takes no pleasure in how much we pray, but in our purity of heart and sorrow for sin; and so let us stand singing psalms in such a way that mind and voice are in harmony.

#### Prayer

Omnipotent God, our hope and our strength, since without you we collapse, please help us to follow the Prince and to live in accordance with your will. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

Resume with the Te Deum

## onδay

#### First Reading

*Judges 4.1-24*

After Ehud's death, the descendants of Israel again offended YHWH, and so YHWH allowed them to fall into the clutches of the Canaanite king Jabin, who reigned in Hazor. The general of his army was Sisera, whose home was in Harosheth-ha-goiim. But the descendants of Israel called out to YHWH, because he oppressed the Israelites severely for twenty years with his nine hundred chariots.

At this time the prophetess Deborah, wife of Lappidoth, was judge over Israel; she would sit under Deborah's palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the mountain region of Ephraim, and the descendants of Israel would come to her there for her to issue her verdicts.

She sent for Barak, son of Abinoam, from Kedesh in Naphtali, and



told him, “This is what the God of Israel, YHWH, commands: ‘Go, march on Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand Naphtalites and Zebulunites; I will lead Sisera, the general of Jabin’s army, out to you at the Wadi Kishon, along with his chariots and troops, and will subject them to your power.’”

Barak answered, “If you come with me, I will go; but if you do not come with me, I will not go.” “Yes, I will go with you,” she answered, “but you will not gain the glory in the expedition you are embarking on, because YHWH will have Sisera fall into the power of a woman.” Then Deborah joined Barak and traveled with him to Kedesh.

Barak then summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and ten thousand men followed him; and Deborah went up with him also. It happened that the Kenite Heber had withdrawn from his own people, the descendants of Moses’ brother-in-law Hobab, and had pitched his tent by the terebinth of Zaananim, which was near Kedesh.

It was reported to Sisera that Barak, son of Abinoam, had gone up to Mount Tabor; and so Sisera mustered from Harosheth-ha-goiim at the Wadi Kishon all nine hundred of his chariots and all his forces. Deborah then said to Barak, “Go on, because this is the day when YHWH has handed Sisera over into your power; YHWH is marching in front of you.”

Barak then went down Mount Tabor, followed by his ten thousand men, and YHWH routed Sisera and all his chariots and forces before Barak. Sisera himself dismounted from his chariot and fled on foot, while Barak was pursuing the chariots and the whole army as far as Harosheth-ha-goiim; the entire army of Sisera was slaughtered with their swords, without even one man surviving.

Meanwhile, Sisera had fled on foot to the tent of Jael, wife of the Kenite Heber, since Jabin, king of Hazor, and the family of the Kenite Heber were at peace with each other. Jael went out to meet Sisera, and told him, “Come in, sir; come in with me; do not be afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

He told her, “May I have a bit of water to drink? I am thirsty.” She opened a jug of milk for him to drink, and then covered him up. “Stand at the entrance of the tent, please,” he told her, “and if anyone comes up and asks if anyone is here, tell him No.”

Instead, Jael, wife of Heber, took a tent peg and a mallet in her hand,

and while Sisera was sound asleep, she crept up and drove the peg through his temple into the ground, so that he expired and died.

Then, when Barak came in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to meet him, and told him, "Come here, I will show you the man you are looking for," and he entered the tent with her, and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg through his temple.

In this way, God brought down the Canaanite king Jabin in this way before the descendants of Israel; their power became heavier and heavier on him until finally they destroyed the Canaanite king Jabin.

God chose the weak to embarrass the strong, so that no one would be able to pride himself in his presence, because his power becomes complete in weakness.

God chose nobodies to shame those who were somebody, because his power becomes complete in weakness.

*Second Reading*                      *Treatise on the Master's Prayer by St. Cyprian*

It is even more true that the one who preaches peace and unity did not want us to pray privately in the sense of individually or for ourselves alone. We do not say, "My Father in heaven," or "give me my daily bread today." A person does not as only for himself to be forgiven, not to be led into trouble or to be kept from harm; we pray as a community, not for one individual but for everyone, because the people of God are all one and the same thing.

And so God is the teacher of harmony, peace, and unity, and wishes each of us to pray for every man, just as he carried every man in himself alone. The three young men shut up in the burning furnace observed this rule of prayer; they uttered the same prayer together because they were united in the bond of Spirit. Holy Scripture gives evidence of this incident for us, so that we will imitate them in our prayer. "Then all three began to sing in unison, and blessed God." Even though the Prince had not yet taught them to pray, they still spoke with one voice.

It is for this reason that their prayer was persuasive and efficacious; because their simple and spiritual prayer of peace was worthy of the presence of the Master. We also find the Emissaries after the ascension praying together in this way. Scripture tells us, "They all joined together in continual prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother

of Jesus, and his relatives.” They all joined together in continual prayer; the urgency and unity of their prayer asserts that “God, who forms a bond of unity among those who live in his home,” will admit into his divine home for all eternity only those who pray in unity.

My dear friends, the Master’s prayer contains many great mysteries of our faith; in these few words, there is great spiritual strength, because this summary of divine teaching contains all of our prayers and pleas. And so, the Master commands us, “Then pray in this way: ‘Our Father in heaven . . .’”

We are new men; we have been reborn and restored to God by his grace. We have already begun to be sons, and we can say, “Father.” John reminds us of this: “He came into his own lands, and his own people did not accept him. But he gave to everyone who did accept him the power to become children of God.” Profess your belief that you are children of God by thanking him; call upon God, who is your Father in heaven.

I will announce your name to my brothers, and praise you in the midst of the assembly.

I will thank you, Master, among the peoples and sing psalms to you among the nations, and praise you in the midst of the assembly.

#### Prayer

Omnipotent God, our hope and our strength, since without you we collapse, please help us to follow the Prince and to live in accordance with your will. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### *First Reading*

*Judges 6.1-6,11-24*

The descendants of Israel offended YHWH, and for this he subjected them to the power of Midian for seven years, so that Midian treated them as slaves. Out of fear of Midian, the descendants of Israel set up fire signals on the mountains, caves for refuge, and strongholds.

What would happen is that when the descendants of Israel finished

planting their crops, Midian, Amalek, and the Kedemites would arrive, camp opposite them, and destroy the land's produce as far as the outskirts of Gaza, leaving no sustenance in Israel, nor sheep, oxen, or donkeys; they would come up with their livestock, and their tents would become as many as locusts; neither they nor their camels could be counted as they entered the land to ravage it. In this way, Israel was reduced to misery by Midian.

At this point, YHWH's angel came up and sat under the terebinth in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. While his son Gideon was threshing wheat in the winepress to save it from the Midianites, YHWH's angel appeared to him and said, "YHWH with you, my champion."

"Sir," Gideon answered, "if YHWH is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are his marvelous actions, like the ones our ancestors told us of when they asked, 'Did YHWH not bring us up from Egypt?' But now YHWH has abandoned us and has subjected us to the power of Midian."

YHWH turned to him and said, "Go with the forces you have and save Israel from the power of Midian; because I am the one who is sending you."

He answered, "My Master, please! How can I save Israel? My family is the lowest rank in Manasseh, and I am the most insignificant in my father's household."

"I will be with you," YHWH told him, "and you will cut Midian down to the last man."

Gideon replied, "If I am in your favor, then please give me a sign that it is you who are speaking to me. Do not leave here, I beg, until I come back to you and bring my offering and set it before you."

"I will wait for your return," he said.

Gideon then went off and prepared a kid and an ephah of flour made into unleavened loaves. He put the meat into a basket and its broth into a pot, and brought them out to the angel under the terebinth and presented it to him. Then YHWH's angel told him, "Take the meat and the unleavened loaves and lay them on this rock; then pour out the broth." When he had done this, YHWH's angel held out the top of the staff he had in his hand and touched the meat and the bread, upon which a fire came up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened loaves, and YHWH's angel disappeared.

Gideon, who was now aware that it had been YHWH's angel, said, "I am doomed! I have seen YHWH's angel face to face!" But YHWH answered, "Be still, and do not be afraid; you will not die."

Gideon then built an altar there to YHWH and called it YHWH-shalom.

I have called you by name for the sake of my slave Jacob and my chosen one Israel. Go, use this strength to free Israel.

I will give you strength so that people will know that I am the Master and there is no other one. Go, use this strength to free Israel.

*Second Reading*      *A Treatise on the Master's Prayer by St. Cyprian*

The Master is so merciful to us, and kind and richly gentle; he wanted us to repeat this prayer in God's presence, to call the Master our Father and, since the Prince is God's son, be called in our turn sons of God. None of us would ever have had the effrontery to utter this name unless he had allowed us himself to pray in this way. And for this reason, my dear friends, we should bear in mind and realize that when we call God our Father, we ought also to act like sons. If it gives us pleasure to call him Father, then he should also be able to take pleasure in calling us sons.

We should live like the temples of God that we are, so that it can be seen that God is alive in us; no act of ours should be unworthy of the Spirit. Now that we have begun to live in heaven and in the Spirit, all our thoughts and actions should be heavenly and spiritual; because, as the Master God has himself said, "I will give honor to those who honor me, and those who despise me will be despised." And the blessed Emissary wrote in his letter, "You do not belong to yourselves; you were bought with a very high price. So glorify and bear God in your body."

We go on and say, "May your name be held in reverence." It is not that we think to make God holy by our prayers; it is that we are asking God to have his name made holy in us. In fact, how could God be made holy, since he is the source of holiness? Still, because he himself said, "Be holy, because I am holy," we pray and beg him that those of us who have been made holy in the Bath will persevere in what we have begun; and we pray for this every day, because we need daily sanctification; since we commit sins every day, we wash our faults off again and again by daily

sanctification.

The Emissary Paul instructs us in these words about the sanctification which God's loving kindness confers on us: "It is not people who engage in casual sex, idolaters, adulterers, practicing homosexuals, thieves, the greedy, drunks, slanderers, and robbers who will inherit the Kingdom of God—and that is what you were, in fact. But you have been washed; you have been sanctified, and you have been made virtuous in the name of our Master Prince Jesus and in the Spirit of our God. We were sanctified," he says, "in the name of our Master Prince Jesus and in the Spirit of our God." And so we make our prayer that this sanctification will remain in us. But more than this, our Master, who is also our judge, warns those who have been cured and brought back to life by him to commit no more sins or something worse might happen to them. And so we offer constant prayers and beg night and day that this sanctification and new life which is ours by God's favor will be preserved by his protection.

I will prove the holiness of my great name; I will douse you with clean water; I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit inside you, so that you will be able to live by my regulations and observe my laws with care.

Be holy, because I am holy, so that you will be able to live by my regulations and observe my laws with care.

#### Prayer

Omnipotent God, our hope and our strength, since without you we collapse, please help us to follow the Prince and to live in accordance with your will. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## ednesday

#### *First Reading*

*Judges 6.33-40, 7.1-8, 16-22*

The whole of Midian and Amalek and the Kedemites mustered and crossed over into the valley of Jezreel, where they encamped. The spirit

of YHWH descended on Gideon, and he blew the horn that summoned Abiezer to follow him, and sent messengers throughout Manasseh, which also obeyed his summons, and he also sent messengers through Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, and those tribes advanced to meet the others.

Gideon then told God, "If you are really going to save Israel through me, as you promised, I am going to put this woolen fleece on the threshing floor. If dew comes only on the fleece, while all the ground is dry, I will know that you will save Israel through me, as you promised."

And that is what happened. Early the next morning, he wrung dew from the fleece, and squeezed out a bowlful of water. Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me if I speak one more time; let me make one more test with the fleece. Let only the fleece be dry, but have dew on all the ground." That night God did this; the fleece was the only thing that was dry, and there was dew all over the ground.

Early the next morning, Jerbbaal (that is, Gideon) encamped by Enharod with all his soldiers; the Midian camp was in the valley north of Gibeah-hammoreh. YHWH told Gideon, "You have too many soldiers with you for me to hand Midian into their power, or Israel will think too much of itself before me and say, 'My own power is what brought the victory.' So go tell all the soldiers, 'If anyone is afraid or timid, he can leave.'"

When Gideon tried this on the soldiers on the mountain, twenty-two thousand soldiers left; but there were still ten thousand of them. YHWH then told Gideon, "There are still too many soldiers. Lead them down to the water and I will provide a test of them for you there. If I tell you that some man is to go with you, then he is to go with you; but no one is to go if I say he must not."

When Gideon led the soldiers down to the water, YHWH told him, "Take aside everyone who laps up the water in the way a dog does, with his tongue; put on the other side everyone who kneels down to drink." Those who lapped up the water they picked up in their hands numbered three hundred, while all the rest of the soldiers knelt down to drink the water.

YHWH then told Gideon, "It is with these three hundred who have lapped up the water that I will save you and hand Midian over into your power; so let all the other soldiers go home." Their horns and those

supplies the soldiers had with them were taken up, and Gideon ordered the rest of the descendants of Israel to their tents, while he kept the three hundred men.

The Midianite camp was beneath him in the valley. He divided the three hundred men into three companies, and provided them all with horns and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. "Watch me," he said, "and follow my lead. I will go to the edge of the camp, and you are to do what I do. When I and those with me blow our horns, you will blow horns all around the camp, and shout, 'For YHWH and for Gideon!'"

So Gideon and the three hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after the posting of the guards. They blew the horns and broke the jars; in their left hands they held the torches and in their right the horns they were blowing, and shouted, "A sword for YHWH and for Gideon!"

They all remained standing in place around the camp, while the whole camp fell to running and shouting and fleeing; but the three hundred men kept blowing their horns, and throughout the camp, YHWH had them slaughter each other with their swords.

It was to shame the strong that God chose the weak; he chose those the world considers vulgar and contemptible, nobodies, to humble those who were somebody, so that no one could take pride in his presence.

The Master has dethroned the powerful and elevated the little ones, so that no one could take pride in his presence.

*Second Reading*      *A Treatise on the Master's Prayer by St. Cyprian*

The prayer continues, "Please come to us and rule over us." We pray for God's kingdom to become present for us in the same way that we ask for his name to be held in reverence among us. That is, when is God not ruling? When could there be a beginning in him, since he always was and will never cease to be? What we pray for is that the kingdom promised to us by God will come, the kingdom won by the Prince's blood and suffering; then those of us who once were slaves in this world will reign from now on under the dominion of the Prince, in accordance with his promise: "Come, those my Father has blessed, accept the kingdom which was prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Nevertheless, my dear friends, it could also be that the Kingdom of



God whose coming we wish for every day is the Prince himself, since it is his coming that we long for. He is our return to life, since we return to life again in him; and in this sense he can also be thought of as the Kingdom of God because we are to reign in him. And it is good for us to pray for God's Kingdom; because, though it is a heavenly Kingdom, it is also an earthly one. But those who have already renounced the world are made greater by holding positions of authority in that Kingdom.

After this, we add, "Have your way on earth just as you do in heaven." We do not pray for God to do his will, but for us to carry out his will. How could anyone prevent the Master from doing what he pleases? But in our prayer, we ask for God's pleasure to be done in us, because the devil throws up obstacles to prevent our mind and our conduct from obeying God in everything; so if he is to have his way in us, we need his will—that is, his help and protection. No one can be strong by his own strength or secure except by God's mercy and forgiveness. Even the Master, to show the weakness of the human nature he bore, said, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by"; and then, by way of example to his students for them to do God's will and not their own, he added, "Still, not what I wish, but what you will."

All the Prince did, everything he taught, was the will of God. Humility in our daily lives, an unwavering faith, a moral sense of restraint in our conversation, virtue in our actions, mercy in deeds, self-control, refusal to harm others, a readiness to suffer harm, peaceableness with our brothers, a wholehearted love of the Master, loving in him what is the Father's, respecting him because he is God, preferring nothing to him since he preferred nothing to us, clinging tenaciously to his love, standing by his cross with loyalty and courage whenever there is any conflict involving his honor and his name, revealing in our speech the constancy of our profession and under torture confidence for the fight, and in dying the perseverance for which we will receive the winner's laurel crown—this is what it means to wish to be a coheir with the Prince, to keep God's command; this is what it means to do the will of the Father.

If you do the will of my heavenly Father, you will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Whoever does the will of God is my brother, or sister, or mother.

You will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

**Prayer**

Omnipotent God, our hope and our strength, since without you we collapse, please help us to follow the Prince and to live in accordance with your will. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



## Thursday

**First Reading**

*Judges 8.22-23, 30-32, 9.1-15, 19-20*

The descendants of Israel told Gideon, “Be our king—you, your son and your grandson—because you rescued us from the power of Midian.” But Gideon answered, “I will not be king over you, and my son will not be your king; YHWH is to be your king.”

As it happened, Gideon had seventy sons, direct descendants of his, because he had a large number of wives. His concubine who lived in Shechem also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelech. At a good old age Gideon, son of Joash, died and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Abimelech, son of Jerubbaal, went to his mother's relatives in Shechem and told them and the whole clan to which his mother's family belonged, “As this of all the citizens in Shechem: ‘Which is better for you: to have seventy men, all of Jerubbaal's sons be your kings, or to have one man be king over you?’ You must remember that I am your own flesh and bone.”

When his mother's relatives repeated this to them on his behalf, all the citizens of Shechem sympathized with Abimelech, and thought, “He is our relative.” They also gave him seventy silver sheckels from the temple of Baal of Berith, which Abimelech used to hire worthless, criminal men as his followers.

He then went to his ancestral house in Ophrah, and killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone; only the youngest son of Jerubbaal, Jotham, escaped, because he had been hidden. Then

all the citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo assembled and proceeded to make Abimelech king by the terebinth at the memorial pillar in Shechem.

When this was reported to him, Jotham went to the top of Mount Gerezim, and as he stood there, he shouted out to them, "Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, so that God will listen to you! Once the trees went to anoint a king over themselves; and so they said to the olive tree, 'You be our king,' but the olive tree answered them, 'Am I to give up my rich oil which honors men and gods, and go wave over the trees?'

"Then the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come, you be our king,' but the fig tree answered, 'Must I give up my sweetness and my good fruit, and go wave over the trees?'

"Then all the trees said to the buckthorn, 'Come, you be our king,' but the buckthorn answered the trees, 'If you want to anoint me as king over you in good faith, come and take refuge in my shade; if not, may fire come from the buckthorn and devour the cedars of Lebanon!'

"Now if you have acted in good faith and honor toward Jerubbaal and his family today, enjoy Abimelech and may he find happiness in you. But if not, may fire come from Abimelech to devour the citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo, and may fire come from the citizens and Beth-millo to devour Abimelech!"

I will not be your king, nor will my son; the Master is to be your king.

Praise, honor, glory and power to the one who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb, forever and ever. The Master is to be your king.

*Second Reading      A Treatise on the Master's Prayer by St. Cyprian*

As the Master's prayer continues, we ask, "Please give us today the bread we need for the day." We can understand this request in a spiritual and a literal sense, because in the divine plan both senses can help toward our rescue, since the Prince is the bread of life, and this bread is ours alone, and does not belong to everyone. When we say, "Our Father," we understand that he is the father of those who know him and believe in him; in the same way, we speak of "the bread we need for the day" because the Prince is the bread of those who touch his body.

Now those of us who live in the Prince and receive this Eucharist, which is the food of rescue, ask for this bread to be given us every day; otherwise, we may be forced to abstain from this communion because of

some serious sin. In this way, we will be separated from the Prince's body, as he taught us in the words, "I am the bread of life which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats my bread will live forever; and the bread I am to give you is the meat of my body, for the life of the world." The Prince is saying, then, that anyone who eats his bread will live forever; and clearly, the ones who possess life are the ones who approach his body and share in the Eucharistic communion.

This is why we should be apprehensive, and pray that no one has to abstain from this communion, or he will be separated from the body of the Prince and be far from rescue. The Prince has warned us of this: "If you do not eat the meat of the Son of Man's body and drink his blood, you will have no life in you." We pray for our daily bread, the Prince, to be given to us; with his help, those of us who live and have their home in him will never be separated from his body and his grace.

After this, we ask pardon for our sins, in the words, "And forgive the debts we owe you." The gift of bread is followed by a prayer for forgiveness. To be reminded that we are sinners and forced to ask forgiveness for our faults is wise and healthy. Even while we are asking God's forgiveness, our hearts are aware of our state. This command to pray every day for our sins reminds us that we commit sin every day; no one should complacently think himself innocent, or his pride might lead him to further sins. This is the warning that John gives us in his letter: "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, the Master is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins." His letter includes both points; that we are to beg forgiveness for our sins, and that we receive pardon when we do. He calls the Master faithful, because he remains loyal to his promise, by forgiving our sins. He both taught us to pray for our sins and our faults, and also promised to show us a father's mercy and forgiveness.

My hope is in you, my Master, and my hope will never be futile, because you are my rock and my fortress. For your name's sake, please lead and guide me.

Please look at my misery and suffering and forgive all my sins. For your name's sake, please lead and guide me.

*Prayer*

Omnipotent God, our hope and our strength, since without you we collapse, please help us to follow the Prince and to live in accordance with your will. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

FRIDAY*First Reading**Judges 13.1-25*

The descendants of Israel again offended YHWH, and so he subjected them to the power of the Philistines for forty years.

There was a man from Zorah, who belonged to the clan of the Danites, and whose name was Manoah; his wife was barren, and had borne no children. One of the Master's angels appeared to the woman and told her, "Even though you are barren and have had no children, you will still conceive and bear a son. So now be careful not to take any wine or alcoholic drink or eat anything unclean. And, as for the son you are to bear, no razor is to touch his head, because this boy is to be consecrated to God from the womb; he is the one who will begin the rescue of Israel from the power of the Philistines."

The woman went and told her husband, "A man of God came to me; he looked like one of God's angels, and was very frightening. I did not ask him where he came from, and he did not tell me his name; but he said to me, 'You will become pregnant and bear a son, and so do not drink any wine or anything alcoholic and eat nothing unclean, because the boy will be consecrated to God from the womb until the day of his death.'" Manoah then prayed to YHWH, "Master, I beg you," he said, "please have the man of God you sent return to us to teach us what to do for the boy when he is born."

God listened to Manoah's prayer, and God's angel again came to the woman as she was seated in the field. Since her husband Manoah was not with her, she ran quickly and told her husband, "The man who came to me the other day has appeared to me."

Manoah came out and followed his wife, and when he reached the

man, he asked, “Are you the one who spoke to my wife?”

“Yes,” he answered.

“Then when what you say comes true,” replied Manoah, “what are we expected to do for the boy?”

YHWH’s angel answered Manoah, “Your wife is to abstain from all the things I told her; she must not eat anything that comes from a vine, or drink wine or anything alcoholic, or eat anything unclean. She is to observe all that I commanded.”

Manoah then asked the angel, “Can we persuade you to stay, while we prepare a kid for you?” and YHWH’s angel answered, “Even if you insist, I will not share your food; but if you wish, you may make a holocaust to YHWH.”

Not knowing it was one of YHWH’s angels, Manoah asked him, “What is your name, so that we can give you your due respect when your words come true?” and YHWH’s angel replied, “Why do you ask my name, which is a secret?” Manoah then took the kid with a grain offering and offered it on the rock to YHWH, whose deeds are secrets.

While Manoah and his wife were still watching, as the flame rose from the altar to the sky, YHWH’s angel rose up in the flame from the altar. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell prostrate to the ground; but YHWH’s angel was seen no more by Manoah or his wife.

Then Manoah, who realized that it was one of YHWH’s angels said, “We are sure to die, because we have seen God!” but his wife pointed out, “If YHWH had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a holocaust and grain offering from our hands—and he would not have let us see all this just now, or hear what we heard.”

The woman bore a son and named him Samson; the boy grew up and YHWH blessed him; the spirit of YHWH first stirred within him in Mahaneh-dan, which is between Zorah and Eshtaol.

The angel said to Zechariah, “Your wife will bear a son to you, and you are to name him John; he will drink no wine or anything alcoholic, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb, because the boy is to be a Nazarite consecrated to God.”

The Master’s angel appeared to the wife of Manoah and told her, “You will become pregnant and bear a son, and no razor will touch his head, because the boy is to be a Nazarite consecrated to God.”

*Second Reading      A Treatise on the Master's Prayer by St. Cyprian*

The Prince clearly laid down an additional rule to bind us to a certain contractual condition: we ask that our debts be forgiven insofar as we forgive our own debtors. In this way, we are made aware that we cannot have what we ask in regard to our own wrongdoings unless we do the same for those who do wrong against us. This is why he says elsewhere, "The measure you use for dealing to others is the measure that will be used when you receive." And the servant who refuses to forgive his fellow servant after his master forgives all his debt is thrown into prison; because he refused to be kind to his fellow servant, he lost the favor his master had given him.

Along with his other regulations, the Prince imposes this one even more forcefully with a severe condemnation. He says, "When you stand up to pray, if you have anything against anyone, let it go, so that your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive the wrongs of others against you, your Father will not forgive your wrongs either." You will have no excuse on Judgment Day, because then you will be judged in the same way that you have judged, and you will suffer whatever you have done to others.

God orders us to be peace-loving, harmonious, and "of one mind in his house"; he wants us to live with the new life he gave us at our second birth. As sons of God, we are to live in peace; and since we have one Spirit, we should be one in mind and heart. In this way, God does not accept the sacrifice of one who lives in conflict; and he orders us to turn back from the altar and first be reconciled with our brother, so that God will be able to be appeased by the prayers of the one who is at peace. The greatest offering we can make to God is our peace; harmony among fellow Christians, a people united with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

When Cain and Abel first offered their sacrifices, God did not consider the gifts as much as the spirit of the giver; God was pleased with Abel's offering because he was pleased with his spirit; and so Abel, the virtuous man, the peacemaker, in his innocent sacrifice taught men that when they offer their gift at the altar, they should approach as he did, with respect for God, simplicity of heart, and ruled by virtue and peaceful harmony. Since this was the character of Abel's offering, it was only right that he would later become a sacrifice himself. As the first evidence of

martyrdom and as possessing the Master's qualities of virtue and peace, he foreshadowed the Master's suffering in the glory of his own death. This is the type of man, then, who is given the victory laurel crown by the Master, and who will be made virtuous with him on the day of judgment.

But St. Paul and the sacred Scriptures tell us that a quarrelsome man and a troublemaker, who is never at peace with his brothers, cannot escape the charge of internal dissension, even though he may die for the Prince's name. That is, it is written, "One who hates his brother is a murderer," and he cannot attain the Kingdom of Heaven. God cannot tolerate a murderer; he cannot be united with the Prince, if he has preferred to imitate Judas rather than the Prince.

I beg you to lead a life that is appropriate to the vocation you have been called to; be careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is only one hope given to you by your calling.

May God bestow on you the gift of living in harmony with each other, so that you will give glory to God together with one voice. There is only one hope given to you by your calling.

#### Prayer

Omnipotent God, our hope and our strength, since without you we collapse, please help us to follow the Prince and to live in accordance with your will. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

*Judges 16.4-6, 16-31*

Afterward, it happened that Samson fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek, named Delilah; and the Philistine lords came up to her and said, "Tempt him and find out the source of his great strength, and how we can overcome him, tie him up, and keep him helpless; and everyone of us will give you eleven hundred silver pieces."



Delilah then said to Samson, "Please tell me the secret of your great strength, and how you could be tied up and made helpless." And she pestered him every day with her questions and kept after him so much that he was sick to death of it, and finally told her the truth, and said, "No razor has ever touched my head, because I have been a Nazarite dedicated to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, my strength will leave me, and I will become as weak as any other man."

When Delilah saw that he had been completely open with her, she sent for the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Come to us again, because he has told me the whole truth," and the Philistines brought her the money.

She lulled him to sleep on her lap and called in a man who shaved the seven locks of hair off his head; and then she began to taunt him, because his strength had left him. She said, "The Philistines are here, Samson!" He woke and said, "I will escape as I did before, and shake myself free of these bonds," not realizing that YHWH had left him.

The Philistines then took him captive and blinded him, and brought him to Gaza. They put him in bronze fetters, and he was put to grinding in the prison; but his hair began to grow again after it had been shaved.

Later, the lords of the Philistines gathered for a sacrifice to their god Dagon, and to hold a festival. They said, "Our god has put our enemy Samson into our power!"

When the people saw him, they praised their god and said, "Our god has handed our enemy over to us, the one who destroyed our country, and the one who killed huge numbers of us!" And as they became drunk, they said, "Call for Samson, to have him act the clown for us!"

They took Samson from the prison, and made him act like a clown, between two pillars. Then Samson told the one who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars that are holding up the temple, so that I can lean on them." The temple was full of men and women; all the lords of the Philistines were there, with about three thousand men and women on the roof watching Samson perform.

Then Samson called upon YHWH, and said, "Master YHWH, please remember me! Give me strength just this once, my God, so that I can take vengeance on the Philistines one last time for my two eyes!" Then Samson grabbed the two middle pillars that supported the temple and braced himself between one on his right and the other on his left, and

said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" and pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. Those he killed at his own death were more than he had killed during his life.

Then his relatives and those in his father's household came down and took him and brought him to a place between Zorah and Eshtaol, and buried him in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had been judge over Israel twenty years.

Please come to my defense, my God, and take up my case against a faithless people, because you are my Rock and my fortress.

Please remember me and give me strength this one last time, because you are my Rock and my fortress.

*Second Reading      A Treatise on the Master's Prayer by St. Cyprian*

Dear friends, why should we find surprising the fact that God has taught us a prayer like this? Did he not express all of our prayers in his own living words? In fact, this was already foretold by Isaiah, when, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he referred to the majesty and fidelity of God? "The Master will say a brief final word about virtue, a word spoken throughout the world." Our Master Prince Jesus came for all mankind; he gathered men and women, the learned and the ignorant, the old and young, and taught them the lore that saved them. He did not want his students burdened by memorizing his teaching; he made a complete summary of those of his commands necessary for a trusting faith, which could be learned quickly.

And this is the way he summarized his teaching on the mystery of eternal life and its meaning, with an admirable, divine brevity: "Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Prince Jesus, the one you sent." Again, in quoting the first and greatest commandment of the Law and the prophets, he spoke in the same way: "Pay attention, Israel: your God the Master is the only Master;" and "you are to love your God the Master with your whole heart, your whole soul, and all your strength. This is the first commandment. The second is like it: you are to love your neighbor in the same way as you love yourself. The whole Law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." On another occasion, our Master said, "Always treat others in the way you would want them to treat you; that is the meaning of the Law and the

prophets.”

God taught us to pray not only by his words, but by his actions also. He taught us by his own example, since he often prayed on our behalf. He explained this to the Rock. “Now Satan has asked permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you so that your faith will not fail.” Later, he prayed to the Father for everyone: “I am not now praying only for them, but for those who will believe in me through what they say, so that they will be one thing, exactly as you are one thing in me and I am one thing in you; that they will be one thing in us.” God loves us; and for our rescue he is generous toward us. He is not satisfied with redeeming us with his blood; he prays to the Father on our behalf. Consider the love exemplified in that prayer; the Father and the Son are one and the same thing; and we are also to have our home in that same unity.

I raise my soul up to you, my Master; I put my trust in you, my God; and so please do not let me be disappointed.

Please guide me in the way of your truth and teach me, because you are the God who saves me, and I hope in you all day long. I put my trust in you, my God; and so please do not let me be disappointed.

#### Prayer

Omnipotent God, since you are our hope and strength, and without you we are weaklings, please help us to follow the Prince and to live as you will. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

# Gwelŷth Sunday in ORDINARY TIME

## *First Reading*

*1 Samuel 16.1-13*

YHWH said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn Saul, since I have rejected him as king of Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and leave, since I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, because I have chosen my king from among his sons.”

Samuel answered, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.”

YHWH said, “Take a heifer and say that you have gone to make a sacrifice to YHWH; and then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you are to do. You will anoint for me the one I point out to you.”

Samuel did what YHWH told him, and went to Bethlehem; and the elders of the town were fearful, and asked him, “Are you coming in peace?” He answered, “Yes, I come in peace; I have come to make a sacrifice to YHWH. Purify yourselves and accompany me to the sacrifice.” Then he had Jesse and his sons purify themselves, and invited them to the sacrifice.

As they came up, he looked at Eliab and said, “The one YHWH anoints has to be before him now.” But YHWH told Samuel, “Do not consider his looks or his physical height, because YHWH does not look on people in a human way; men look at the outward appearance, but YHWH sees the heart.”

So Jesse called Aminadab, and brought him before Samuel, and he said, “YHWH has not chosen this one either”; and Jesse then brought up Sammah, and he said, “YHWH has not chosen this one either”; and Jesse brought up seven of his sons, and Samuel said, “YHWH has not chosen these.” Then Samuel added, “Are all the young men here?” and Jesse answered, “There is only the youngest left; and he is out tending

to the sheep.”

Samuel told Jesse, “Send for him and bring him to me; we will not dine until he comes here.” So he sent for him; he was tanned, bright-eyed, and handsome. And YHWH said, “Go forward and anoint him, because he is the one,” and so Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in front of his brothers, and YHWH’s Spirit came upon David from that day on. Then Samuel left for Ramah.

I have placed a crown on my warrior, and have elevated the one chosen from among the people; my strong right hand will always be with him.

I have found my slave David, and have anointed him with my holy oil. My strong right hand will always be with him.

*Second Reading*      *Treatise on the Trinity by Faustus Luciferanus*

Our Savior received a bodily anointing and so became a true king and a true priest. He was in his own self king and priest; a savior could be nothing less. Listen to his own words saying how he became a king: “I have been appointed king by God on his holy mountain Zion.” And listen to the Father’s words that he was a priest: “You are a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek.” Aaron was the first under the Law to be made priest by being anointed with chrism; yet the Father does not say, “in the line of Aaron,” to prevent the belief that the Savior’s priesthood could be passed on by inheritance, as at that time Aaron’s priesthood was transmitted by lineal descent. The Savior’s priesthood, however, is not inherited, because this priest lives on forever; and so Scripture says, “You are a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek.”

There is, therefore, a savior in the flesh who is both a king and a priest, though his anointing was spiritual and not physical. Among the Israelites, those kings and priests who were actually anointed with oil were either kings or priests; but no man could be both king and priest; he had to be one or the other. Only the Prince was both king and priest; because he had come to fulfill the Law, he alone possessed the twofold quality of kingship and priesthood.

Those who had been anointed with the oil of royalty or priesthood were called messiahs, even though they received only one of these anointings. But our Savior, who is the Anointed, the Christ, the Prince, was anointed by the Holy Spirit, so that this passage in Scripture would

be fulfilled: “God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness and raised you above your companions.” The difference, then, between the one Anointed and the many other anointed people is in the anointing, since he was anointed with the oil of gladness, which signifies nothing other than the Holy Spirit.

We know this to be true from the Savior himself; when he took the book of Isaiah, he opened it and read, “The Spirit of the Master is upon me, because he has anointed me.” He then said that the prophesy was fulfilled in the hearing of those listening.

The Rock, the head of the Emissaries, also taught that the chrism which made the Savior a Christ was the Holy Spirit, or in other words, the Power of God. The Rock said to that faithful and merciful centurion, among other things, “After the Bath which John preached, Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, started out in Galilee and traveled about performing powerful miracles, and freeing everyone possessed by the devil.”

So you see that the Rock also said that Jesus in his humanity was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power. Thus, Jesus in his humanity really became the Christ, the Prince. By the anointing of the Holy Spirit, he was made both king and priest forever.

See how great is the one who is coming to save the nations; he is the king of virtue, whose reign will never end.

For our sake, Jesus went before us into heaven and has become a high priest forever in the line of Melchizedek. He is the king of virtue, whose reign will never end.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, guide and protector of your people, please bestow on us an unfailing respect for your name, and keep us always in your love. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

*First Reading**1Samuel 17.1-10,32,38-51*

The Philistines rallied their forces for battle at Sochoh in Judah, and camped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. Saul and the Israelites also mustered their forces, in the Valley of Elah, and formed their battle-lines against the Philistines. The Philistines were on a hill on one side, and Israel was on an opposite hill, with a valley between them.

A champion named Goliath from Gath came out of the Philistine camp. He was six cubits and a span tall, wearing a bronze helmet and a coat of mail weighing five thousand bronze shekels; he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze scimitar hanging between his shoulders. His spear's staff was like a weaver's beam, and its iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; a shield-bearer preceded him.

He stood there and called out to the armies of Israel, "Why are you lined up for battle? I am a Philistine and you are Saul's servants; choose yourselves a man and have him come down to me. If he can fight and kill me, we will be your slaves; but if I win and kill him, you will be our slaves and serve us." The Philistine added, "I challenge the men of Israel on this day. Give me a man, and we will fight it out."

Then David told Saul, "No one should turn coward because of him! Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine!"

Saul then dressed David with his armor, and put a bronze helmet on his head; and also dressed him in a coat of mail. David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, because he had not tested them before; and then he told Saul, "I can't walk in this, because I have not tried it on before." So David took it all off.

Then, staff in hand, he chose for himself five smooth stones from the wadi and put them in a pouch, the shepherd's bag he had, and took up his sling in his hand and went up to the Philistine.

The Philistine advanced toward David, with his shield-bearer in front of him, and when he looked about and saw David, he scorned him, because he was only a boy, though tanned and handsome. And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, for you to come to me with sticks?" and he cursed David by his gods, adding to David, "Come over here, and I'll make you meat for the birds in the air and the animals in

the fields.”

David then said to the Philistine, “You are coming at me with a sword, a spear, and a scimitar. I am coming to you in the name of YHWH Commander of armies, the God of Israel’s armies, who is the one you insulted. Today, YHWH will hand you over to me, and I will strike you down and take your head off. And this is the day I will make the carcasses of the Philistine camp meat for the birds in the air and the beasts in the field, so that the whole earth will know that there is a God in Israel. Then this whole gathering will know that YHWH does not save people with swords and spears; the battle belongs to YHWH, and he will hand you over to us.”

And so, when the Philistine came forward and approached David, David rushed over to the battle-line to meet the Philistine; and then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, which he slung and hit the Philistine in the forehead so hard that the stone sank into it, and he fell to the ground on his face. And so David won over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he felled the Philistine and killed him without having a sword in his hand. And then David ran up and stood over him, drew the Philistine’s sword out of its sheath, and chopped off his head.

The Master has saved me from the lion’s mouth and the bear’s claws; he will set me free from my enemies’ hands.

God has sent me his faithfulness and love; he has rescued me from a pack of lions. He will set me free from my enemies’ hands.

*Second Reading*

*A Treatise on Christian Perfection  
by St. Gregory of Nyssa*

No one knew the Prince better than Paul, or surpassed Paul in the careful example he gave of what anyone who bears the Prince’s name should be. He mirrored his Master so precisely that he became his very image; and by painstaking imitation, he was transformed into his model, and it seemed to be the Prince himself who lived and spoke, no longer Paul. He shows his keen awareness of this grace when he refers to the Corinthians’ desire for proof that the Prince was speaking in him; as he says, “It is no longer I who live; the Prince lives in me.”



Paul teaches us the power of the Prince's name when he calls him the power and wisdom of God, our peace, the unapproachable light where God lives, our expiation and redemption, our great high priest, our paschal sacrifice, and our atonement, when he declares him to be the radiance of God's glory, the very pattern of his nature, the creator of all ages, our spiritual food and drink, the rock and the water, the bedrock of our faith, the cornerstone, and the visible counterpart of the invisible God. He goes on to speak of him as the mighty God, the head of his body, the Church, the firstborn of the new creation, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep, the firstborn of the dead, and the oldest of many brothers; he also tells us that the Prince is the mediator between God and man, the only Son God ever fathered, crowned with glory and honor, the Master of glory, the source of everything, the king of virtue and peace, and the king of the whole universe, who rules a realm that has no limits.

Paul calls the Prince by many other titles too numerous to mention here; but their cumulative force will give some conception of the marvelous content of the name "Prince," revealing to us his inexpressible majesty, to the extent that our minds and thoughts can comprehend it. Since, by the goodness of God, those of us who are called "Christians" have been granted the honor of sharing this name, the greatest, highest, and most sublime of all names, it follows that each of the titles that express its meaning should be clearly reflected in us. If we are not to tell a lie when we call ourselves "Christians," we must give evidence of it by our way of living.

Everyone who takes refuge in you should be happy and enjoy this blessing forever. Please protect all of these people, and those who love your name will be overjoyed because of you.

They will walk in the light of your presence and find their pleasure in your name all day long. And those who love your name will be overjoyed because of you.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you are guide and protector of your people, please bestow on us an unflinching respect for your name, and keep us always in your love. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your

Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



## Tuesday

### *First Reading*

*1 Samuel 17.57-18.9, 20-30*

When David came back from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and presented him to Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. Saul asked him, “Whose son are you, young man?” and David answered, “The son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem.”

By the time David had finished speaking to Saul, Jonathan became so attached to him that he loved him as if he were his own soul. Saul took him to himself that day, and would not let him go to his father’s house any longer; and Jonathan and David made a compact together, because he loved him as if he were his own soul: Jonathan took off the robe he had on and gave it to David, along with his armor, even to his sword, bow, and belt.

David then went wherever Saul sent him and was successful; and Saul gave him command of his army, and he was accepted by the whole people and all of Saul’s servants.

As they were returning him after David had come back from killing the Philistine, women came from all the cities of Israel, singing, dancing, and celebrating with tambourines and sistrums. The women were singing as they danced, “Saul has killed thousands, but David millions!”

Saul resented this song very much, because he thought, “They talk of millions for David but only thousands for me. What more can he have but the kingdom?” And from that day on, Saul was jealous of David.

It happened that Saul’s daughter Michal loved David; this was reported to Saul, who approved, and thought, “I will marry her to him to entangle him, so that the Philistines will be able to overcome him; and so Saul told David a second time, “You are to become my son-in-law today.” Saul told his servants to mention this privately and say, “You see how fond the king is of you, and how all his servants love you. So become the king’s son-in-law.”

But when Saul’s servants spoke of this to David, he answered, “Do you think it is a simple thing to become the king’s son-in-law? I am poor

and insignificant.” Saul’s servants then reported to him the reply he made.

Saul answered, “This is what you are to say to David: ‘The king does not want any other dowry except the foreskins of a hundred Philistines, so that he can have vengeance on the king’s enemies.’—but what Saul intended was to have him killed by the Philistines.

David, however, was very pleased with the offer Saul’s servants reported, and decided to become the king’s son-in-law. Before the year was over, David mustered his army and he and his men killed two hundred of the Philistines, whose foreskins he brought back and counted out before the king, so that he could become the king’s son-in-law. Then Saul married him to his daughter Michal.

Saul realized when he saw this that YHWH was with David, and besides, Michal loved him; but this made Saul more afraid of David than ever, and he became his enemy ever afterward.

The Philistine chiefs continued to make forays, but each time they took the field, David was more successful against them than any other of Saul’s officers; and as a result, he acquired great fame.

Have pity on me, my God, because people are trampling me down; they persecute me all day long with their constant attacks. I place my trust in you.

Because you have rescued my soul from death and have kept my feet from tripping. I place my trust in you.

*Second Reading*

*A Treatise on Christian Perfection  
by St. Gregory of Nyssa*

The Christian life has three distinguishing characteristics: actions, words, and thoughts. Thought comes first, then words, since our words express overtly the interior conclusions of our minds. Lastly, after thoughts and words, comes action, because our actions carry out what our minds have conceived; and so, when one of these aspects results in our acting, speaking, or thinking, we must make sure that all our thoughts, words, and actions are controlled by the divine ideal, the Prince’s revelation; because then our thoughts, words, and actions will not fall short of the nobility of their implications.

Then what must we do if we have been given the privilege of being called by the Prince’s name? Each of us must examine his thoughts,

words, and actions, and see whether they are directed toward the Prince, or way from him.

This examination is carried out in various ways: Our actions, thoughts, or words are not in harmony with the Prince if they result from emotions; in that case, they carry the mark of the enemy, who smears the pearl of the heart with the slime of emotion, and dims and even destroys the luster of that precious stone.

On the other hand, if they are free from and uncontaminated by every emotional inclination, they are directed toward the Prince, who is the originator and source of peace. He is like a pure, untainted stream; if you draw from him the thoughts in your mind and the inclinations of your heart, you will show a resemblance to the Prince, your source and origin, as the gleaming water in a jar resembles the flowing water from which it was taken.

That is, the purity that is the Prince and the purity that is evident in our hearts are identical; but the Prince's purity is the original source; ours has its origin in him and flows out of him. Our life is stamped with the beauty of his thought; the inner and outer man are harmonized in a kind of symphony; the Prince's mind is the controlling influence that inspires us to moderation and goodness in our conduct. As I see it, Christian perfection consists in this: sharing the titles which express the meaning of the Prince's name, we bring out this meaning in our minds, our prayers, and our way of life.

Whatever you do in words or actions, do everything in the name of Master Jesus.

None of us lives simply for himself, and none of us dies for himself alone; do everything in the name of Master Jesus.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you are guide and protector of your people, please bestow on us an unflinching respect for your name and keep us always in your love. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.


 ednesday
*First Reading**1 Samuel 19.8-10, 20.1-17*

When war broke out again, David went out to fight the Philistines, routed them, and inflicted a great defeat on them. Then an evil spirit came on Saul from YHWH as he was seated in his house with spear in hand, and David was playing the harp nearby. Saul tried to nail David to the wall with the spear, but David dodged, so that the spear only struck the wall, and David escaped safely.

David fled from the huts near Ramah, and went to Jonathan. “What have I done?” he asked; “What crime have I committed? What grudge does your father hold against me for him to try to kill me?”

“Do not be foolish! You are not going to die! You know my father does nothing from the most to the least important without consulting me first; so why would he not have told me about this? It is not true.”

David then swore that it was, and said, “Your father obviously knows that you and I are friends, and so he has decided not to let you know of this, to keep you from being upset. But really, I swear that as YHWH is alive and your soul is alive, there is only a step between me and death.”

Jonathan then told David, “I will do whatever you want me to do for you.”

David answered, “Tomorrow, you know, is the new moon, when I am to go to dine with the king. Let me go away and hide in the open country until the evening after tomorrow; if your father misses me at all, say, ‘David begged me to let him run over to his town Bethlehem, to take part in a yearly sacrifice there for all his family.’ If he then says, ‘That is fine,’ then your servant is safe; but if he is very angry, you can be sure that he was plotting some harm. If you do this, you will be doing your servant a great favor, because you will have made a pact of friendship with me before YHWH. And if there is any guilt in me, kill me yourself. Why should you bring me to your father?”

“God forbid!” replied Jonathan. “If I were to find out for certain that my father wanted harm to come to you, would I not tell you?”

David said, “Who is to tell me if your father gives you a rough answer?”

Jonathan said, “Come, let us go out into the open country”; and so

both of them went out into the fields together, and Jonathan said to David, “By YHWH, God of Israel, I swear that when I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow or the day after, and there is really only good will toward David, and I do not send a message to tell you, then may YHWH do certain harm—even more—to Jonathan. But if my father is determined to do harm to you, I will report it to you and send you away, so that you can go on safely. And may YHWH be with you as he has been with my father. And you are to show me not only YHWH’s kindness while I am alive, so that I will not be killed, but you are not to remove your kindness from my household forever, and not even when YHWH has destroyed all of David’s enemies off the face of the earth.” And so Jonathan made a treaty with the household of David, and said, “YHWH will make you answerable for it from David’s enemies.”

Jonathan then made David swear to this again, because he loved him; he loved him as much as his own life.

A true friend loves you at every moment, and a brother proves himself in time of hardship.

Everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God; and a brother proves himself in time of hardship.

*Second Reading A Treatise on Spiritual Friendship by Blessed Aelred*

Jonathan, that outstanding young man, paid no attention to his royal lineage or his hope of the throne, and allied himself with the servant David and made him equal in friendship before the Master. The king had made David a fugitive, forced him to hide in the desert, and condemned him to death; and yet Jonathan preferred David to himself. “You,” he said, “will be king and I will follow you.”

This is a splendid picture of true friendship, and an astonishing situation. Here was the king, raging against his servant and mobilizing the whole country as if David were after the crown; he accuses priests of treason and puts them to death on mere suspicion; he combs and searches woods and valleys, besieges the mountains and rocky crags with troops, and every man is sworn to wreak vengeance on the source of the king’s fury.

Only Jonathan, the one who alone should have had greater reason for envy, thought it right to resist his father; he put himself at the service

of his friend, and offered help and advice in time of need. Jonathan set friendship above a kingdom. "You are to be the king," he said, "and I will be second to you." And still the father tried to turn his son's mind toward envy of David; he heaped abuse on him and frightened him by threatening to deprive him of the kingdom and strip him of his rank.

Even when the king pronounced the sentence of death upon David, Jonathan did not desert his friend. "Why should David die? What crime has he committed? What has he done? When he risked his life and killed the Philistine, you congratulated him; so why should he die?"

The king was so infuriated at this that he tried to pin Jonathan to the wall with his spear, and heaped more abuse and threats on him: "Bastard son of a whore," he screamed, "I know very well that you love him, to your ruin and the ruin of your prostitute mother!" With this, he spat out the complete store of his venom over Jonathan and uttered the words that were his final attempt to arouse bitter envy and jealous ambition, "As long as the son of Jesse is alive, your kingdom will never come into existence!"

Would anyone not be aroused to envy by these words? Whose love, whose favor, whose lasting friendship would not be corrupted, weakened, and destroyed by such a statement? But in his great love, this young man kept faith with his friend; he was firm in the face of threats, and unmoved by insults; he forgot fame and thought only of service. He scorned a kingdom for a friendship. "You," he said, "will be king, and I will be second to you."

This is what really perfect, stable, and lasting friendship is, a tie that envy cannot spoil or suspicion weaken or ambition destroy. A friendship tempted to this degree yielded not an inch, was slapped in the face and did not collapse. In the teeth of so many insults, it remained unshaken. "And so you go and do the same."

A faithful friend is a secure shelter; whoever finds one finds a treasure.

Anyone who respects the Master makes true friendships, because the friend will be like himself; whoever finds one finds a treasure.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you are guide and protector of your people, please bestow on us an unflinching respect for your name and keep us always in

your love. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



*First Reading*

*1 Samuel 21.2-10, 22.1-5*

David then went to Ahimelech, a priest in Nob, who came in fear to meet him, and told him, “Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?”

“The king,” answered David, “has given me orders on some business, but told me not to let anyone know what it dealt with or what the commission was. I have told my men to meet me in another place; and so what do you have on hand here? May I please have five loaves of bread—or whatever you can find.”

“There is no ordinary bread here,” the priest replied; “only the consecrated bread; you may have that, if the men have at least not had sexual intercourse.”

David then told the priest, “In fact, there have been no women with us for about three days since I left; and all the young men are always consecrated, even for a secular journey; but even more so now, because they are consecrated for battle.” So the priest gave him the consecrated bread because there was no other bread available but the showbread which had been removed from YHWH’s presence when it had been replaced by hot bread.

There happened to be one of Saul’s slaves there that day, detained before YHWH, whose name was Doeg, and Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul.

David asked Ahimelech, “Is there a sword or a spear here somewhere that I could have? It happens that I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons, because the king’s business was urgent.”

“The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want that one, you may take it; and there is no other one than that here.”

“There is none like it,” said David. “May I have it, please?”

David then left and fled from Saul, and escaped to the cave of



Adullam. And when his brothers and his father's household heard of this, they went there to meet him; and everyone in debt or who was embittered, rallied round him, and he became their captain. There were about three hundred men with him.

David went from there to Mizpah in Moab, and told the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother stay with you, until I find out what God means to do with me." He left them with the king of Moab, where they stayed as long as David remained in his refuge.

But then the prophet Gad told David, "Do not stay here in this stronghold; leave for the land of Judah"; and so David left and entered the forest of Hereth.

We have been freed from the law; we are dead to what constrained us; now we are slaves of the new way of the Spirit and not under the old bondage of the written law.

Have you not read what David did when he was hungry? He went into God's house and ate the consecrated bread. Now we are slaves of the new way of the Spirit and not under the old bondage of the written law.

*Second Reading*

*A Homily by St. Gregory of Nyssa*

Consider the feelings of a man who looks down into the depths of the sea from the top of a mountain; this is like what I experienced when the Master's voice from high above, as if from a mountaintop, reached the bottomless depths of my intellect. Along the seacoast, you may often see mountains fronting the sea; it is though they had been sliced in two, with a sheer drop from top to bottom. At the top, a projection forms a ledge overhanging the depths below; if a man were to look down from that ledge, he would be overcome by dizziness. In this same way, my soul grows dizzy when he hears the great voice of the Master say, "It is a blessing for people to have a clean heart, because they will see God."

The vision of God is offered to those who have purified their hearts; "yet no man has seen God at any time." These are the words of the great St. John, and they are confirmed by St. Paul's elevated thought, when he says, "God is the one whom no one has seen or can see." He is that smooth, steep, sheer rock on which the mind can find no safe foothold to get a grip or lift itself up. In the view of Moses, he is inaccessible. In spite of every effort, our minds cannot approach him; we are cut off by

the words, “No man can see God and live.” And yet, to see God is eternal life. But John, Paul, and Moses, these columns that hold up our faith, all testify that it is impossible to see God.

Look at the dizziness that affects the soul drawn to contemplating the depths of these statements; if God is life, then the one who does not see God does not see life. Yet God cannot be seen; the Emissaries and prophets, inspired by the Holy Spirit, have testified to this. Man’s hope is driven into so much difficulty!

Yet God does raise and sustain our faltering hopes; he rescued Peter from drowning, and made the sea a firm surface beneath his feet. He does the same for us; the hands of the Word of God are reaching out to us when we are out of our depth, tossed about and lost in speculation. Once we are grasped firmly in his hands, we will be without fear. “It is a blessing for people to have a clean heart, because they will see God.”

No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son of God, the one in the Father’s bosom, who has made him known.

The Master is great and totally deserving of praise; his greatness is beyond our understanding; it is the only Son of God, the one in the Father’s bosom, who has made him known.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you are guide and protector of your people, please bestow on us an unfailing respect for your name and keep us always in your love. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

*1 Samuel 25.14-24, 28-39*

Nabal’s wife Abigail was told by one of the slaves, “David sent messengers from the desert with greetings to our master, but he ran at them screaming; and yet these people were very good to us. We were done no harm, and we did not miss anything all the time we were living

among them during our stay in the open country; they were like a rampart night and day during the whole time we were pasturing the sheep near them. Please see what you can do now, because you should know that otherwise, our master and his whole household are in serious trouble; and he is so hot-headed that no one can speak to him.”

Abigail then hurriedly collected two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of pressed raisins, and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. Then she told her slaves, “You go on before me; I will come after you.”

And as she came down the brow of the hill riding on the donkey, she met David and his men approaching her, with David saying, “It was a real waste of time for me to have protected everything that man had in the desert, and see to it that he lost nothing that belonged to him; he has repaid the good I did him with harm. Then may God blast David if I leave one male that belongs to him alive by dawn!”

When Abigail saw David, she hurriedly dismounted from the donkey and fell prostrate on the ground before him. “My master, please let the blame fall on me! But please give your servant a hearing, and listen to what I say. Please forgive the wrongs your maidservant has done, because YHWH is sure to make a lasting dynasty for my master, because my master fights YHWH’s battles, and no evil has been found in you through your whole life. If anyone comes after you to kill you, may your life be bundled together with the living by your God YHWH, and may he throw away your enemies’ lives as if they were in the pocket of a sling. And when YHWH has done all the good things he promised about you and has established you as ruler over Israel, please do not have grief on your heart or any feeling of guilt for shed innocent blood or taking upon yourself vengeance. When YHWH has shown you favor, my master, please remember your slave.”

David then told Abigail, “Blessed be the God of Israel YHWH, who sent you to meet me today! Your advice and you are such a blessing, because you have kept me from coming to bloodshed today and avenging myself with my own hand; because in fact, it is as true as that God YHWH, who kept me from hurting you, lives, if you had not hurried out to meet me, it would be certain that by dawn no males would have been left to Nabal.”

David then took what she had brought and said, “Go back to your home in peace; I have listened to what you said and respected your person.”

Then, when Abigail came back to Nabal, he was having a drinking-party in his house, fit for a king; and Nabal was enjoying himself because he was very drunk, so she told him nothing at all before daybreak. But in the morning, when Nabal had become sober and his wife informed him of all of this, his courage died within him, and he became like a stone; and after about ten days, YHWH struck Nabal, and he died. When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Blessed be YHWH, who avenged the insult I received at Nabal’s hands, and kept his slave from doing wrong, but punished Nabal himself for the evil he did.

Blessed be the Master, the God of Israel, who sent you to me today, because you have restrained me from shedding blood and from taking vengeance into my own hands.

It is a blessing for people to be merciful because they will receive mercy. You have restrained me from shedding blood and from taking vengeance into my own hands.

*Second Reading*

*A Homily by St. Gregory of Nyssa*

The happiness God promises of course knows no limits; and when a person has gained such a blessing, what is there left to desire? In seeing God one possesses everything. In the Scriptural way of speaking, to see is to have; “May you see what is good in Jerusalem” is another way of saying “May you possess what is good in Jerusalem.” When the prophet says, “May evil men be taken away and not see the Master’s glory,” he means, “May they not share in the Master’s glory.”

A person who has seen God has, in the act of seeing, gained everything that is considered good; unending life, eternal freedom from decay, undying happiness, a kingdom that has no end, enduring joy, a voice to sing beautifully in the spirit, unapproachable glory, and perpetual enjoyment: in a way, the totality of blessing.

And this is the marvelous hope held out by the beatitudes. As we saw, the condition for seeing God is purity of heart; and now once more my mind is in confusion, as if it were suffering an attack of vertigo, wondering if purity of heart is something impossible, or something

beyond the capacity of human nature. If the vision of God is dependent on purity of heart, and if Moses and Paul did not attain this vision—they state that neither they nor anyone else can see God—then the promise of the beatitude spoken by the Word seems to be something impossible of realization.

What do we gain from knowing the means by which God can be seen if we do not have the power to see him? It is like saying that a person has been blessed if he is in heaven because in heaven there are things seen that are not seen on earth. If we were told beforehand how to get to heaven, it would be helpful to know that it is a blessing for us to be in heaven; but as long as the way to heaven is impossible, what do we gain by knowing about the happiness in heaven? This only discourages and annoys us by realizing the benefits we are deprived of because it is impossible to get there.

Surely the Master does not encourage us, does he, to do something impossible to human nature because the magnitude of what is commanded is beyond our human strength? No, the truth is different; he does not command those creatures to which he has not given wings to become birds, nor does he order those to which he has assigned a land life to live in water. And so if in the case of all other creatures, the command is appropriate to the capacity of those who receive it and does not order them to do something beyond their nature, we have to come to the conclusion that we are not to give up hope of gaining what is promised by the beatitude. John and Paul and Moses, then, and any others like them, did not fail to achieve that sublime happiness that comes from the vision of God. Paul did not, because he said, “there is a victor’s laurel crown for virtue in storage for me, and the judge who judges honestly will give it to me,” and John did not, because he leaned on the breast of Jesus, and neither did Moses, who heard God say to him, “I know you more than all the others.”

It is clear that those who taught that the contemplation of God was beyond their powers have themselves received the blessing, and if the blessing consists in the vision of God and is granted to the pure of heart, then purity of heart which leads to the blessing is certainly not among the things that are impossible.

And so it can be said that those who teach with Paul that the vision of God is beyond our powers are right in what they say, but that the

voice of the Master does not contradict them when he promises that the pure in heart will see God.

My soul is thirsty for you, my God; my body longs for you.

In my virtue, I will look upon your face, and when I awake, I will be filled with the vision of your glory; my body longs for you.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you are guide and protector of your people, please bestow on us an unfailing respect for your name and keep us always in your love. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## SATURDAY

#### *First Reading*

*1 Samuel 26.5-25*

David then came to the place where Saul had camped, and saw the spot where Saul and Abner, son of Ner, his army's general, had their sleeping quarters; they were inside the camp, with the soldiers camped all around him. David then approached Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai the son of Zeruah, Joab's brother, and asked, "Who will go down into Saul's camp with me?" Abishai said, "I will go," and so David and Abishai went down among the soldiers during the night, and there was Saul, sleeping inside the encampment, with his spear stuck in the ground beside his head.

Abishai then whispered to David, "God has put your enemy in your power today! Let me impale him with the spear now and pin him to the ground. I will not have to hit him twice!"

"Do not kill him!" said David to Abishai. "Can anyone lay hands on the one YHWH has anointed and escape punishment?" He added, "It is as certain as that YHWH is alive that YHWH will strike him down, or he will go out and die in battle; YHWH forbid that I would raise my hand against the one YHWH anointed! But now, take the spear and the jug of water that are by his head, please, and let us go." So David took the

spear and the jug of water by Saul's head and escaped, and no one saw or was aware or awoke; they were all unconscious, because a deep sleep from YHWH had fallen upon them.

David then went over to the other side and stood on a far-off hilltop, with a great distance between the two camps; and then David called out to Abner, "Answer me, Abner!" Abner answered, "Who are you, calling me?"

"Are you a man or not?" asked David. "Is there anyone like you in Israel? Then why have you not guarded your master the king? One of the soldiers came in to kill your master the king. What you have done is not good, and as sure as YHWH is alive, you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, who was anointed by YHWH. And now look where the king's spear and the jug of water that were by his head are!"

Saul then recognized David's voice, and said, "Is that you speaking, my son David?" and David answered, "Yes, it is my voice, my master the king," and he added, "Why is my master hunting his slave? What have I done? What harm have I plotted? If my master the king would please listen to what his slave is saying! If YHWH has aroused your hatred against me, an offering will appease him; but if it is some mortal man, they should be cursed before YHWH, because they have driven me away from sharing in YHWH's inheritance and tell me to go to other gods. But do not let my blood flow on the ground before YHWH's face; the king of Israel has come out to kill a flea, or as if he were hunting a partridge in the mountains."

Saul then said, "I have sinned. You may return, my son David; I will do you no more harm, because you held my life precious today. I have been such a fool and made such a terrible mistake!"

David answered, "Here is the king's spear. Have one of your young men come over and retrieve it. YHWH rewards every man for his virtue and loyalty; and YHWH put you in my hands today, but I would not raise a hand against the one YHWH anointed; and since I considered your life that valuable today, may my own life be valued as much by YHWH, and may he rescue me from all my trouble."

Then Saul told David, "May blessings come upon you, my son David; you will succeed in whatever you undertake." David then left, and Saul returned home.

Arrogant men have come forward against me, and brutes are trying to kill me. Please save me, my God, by your name and defend my case with your strength.

I will be glad to offer sacrifice to you; please listen to my prayer, my God, and defend my case with your strength.

*Second Reading*

*A Homily by St. Gregory of Nyssa*

In our human life, bodily health is a good thing; but this blessing consists not merely in knowing the cases of good health but actually enjoying it. If a man praises good health and then eats food that has unhealthy effects, what good is his encomium on health when he finds himself on his sickbed? In the same way, we are to learn from the Master's saying that "it is a blessing for people to have pure hearts, because they will see God" that the blessing does not consist in knowing something about God, but in possessing God within oneself.

I do not think that these words mean that god will be seen face to face by the man who purifies the eye of his soul; their profound meaning is brought out more clearly perhaps in that other saying of the Master's: "God's kingdom is inside you." This teaches that a man who washes his heart clean of every created thing and every evil desire will see the image of the divine nature in the beauty of his own soul.

I believe that the lesson summed up by the Word in that short sentence was this: You men have within you a desire to look upon the supreme good; now when you are told that God's majesty is in a place higher than the heavens, that his glory is inexpressible, his beauty indescribable, and his nature transcendent, do not despair because you cannot look upon the object of your desire. If you wash away the film of dirt that covers your heart by a painstaking life of virtue, then the divine beauty will shine out in you.

Take a piece of iron as an illustration. Though it might have been black previously, once the rust has been scraped off with a whetstone, it will begin to shine brilliantly and reflect the sun's rays. This is how it is with the interior man, which is what the Master means by the "heart." Once a man removes from his soul the coating of filth that has formed on it through his sinful neglect, he will regain his resemblance to his Archetype, and be good; because what resembles the supreme good is itself good. If he then looks into himself, he will see the vision he has



longed for. This is the blessing given to the pure of heart; in seeing their own purity, they see the divine Archetype mirrored in themselves.

Those who look at the sun in a mirror, even if they do not look directly into the sky, see its radiance in the reflection just as truly as those who look directly at the sun's disk. It is the same, says the Master, with you. Even though you are not able to contemplate and see the inaccessible light, you will find what you are looking for within yourself, provided you return to the beauty and grace of that image which was originally placed in you. That is, God is purity; he is free from sin and foreign to everything evil. If this can be said of you, then God will certainly be within you; if your mind is untainted by any evil, free from sin, and purified from all stain, then you have received a real blessing, because your sight is keen and clear. Once purified, you see things that others cannot see; when the mists of sin no longer cloud the eyes of your soul, you see that blessed vision clearly in the peace and purity of your own heart. That vision is nothing other than the holiness, the purity, the simplicity, and all the other glorious reflections of God's nature, through which God himself is seen.

The Master said, "I am the way, and I am truth and life. Anyone who is looking at me has seen the Father.

"Whoever believes in me has eternal life; anyone who is looking at me has seen the Father."

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you are guide and protector of your people, please bestow on us an unfailing respect for your name and keep us always in your love. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



# thirteenth Sunday in ORDINARY TIME



*First Reading*

*1 Samuel 28.3-25*

Samuel had died, and the whole of Israel went into mourning for him and buried him in his own city of Ramah. Meanwhile, Saul had expelled all mediums and sorcerers from the country.

The Philistines then mustered and came to Shunem, where they camped; and Saul mustered all of Israel and camped them at Gilboa. When he caught sight of the Philistine army, he was afraid, and completely lost heart; he consulted YHWH, but YHWH gave him no answer, either by dreams or the Urim or through prophets.

Saul then told his slaves, "Find me a woman who is a medium that I can consult."

"Actually, there is a woman in Endor," answered the slaves, "who is a medium."

Saul then disguised himself and dressed in other clothes, and went with two men to the woman during the night. "I would like you to hold a seance for me, please," he said, "and bring up the person I will name for you."

The woman answered, "Look, you know how Saul has driven sorcerers and mediums out of the country. Why are you setting traps for me? Do you want to have me killed?"

Saul then took an oath by YHWH, and said, "As sure as YHWH is alive, no punishment will come upon you for this."

"Who shall I bring up for you?" asked the woman.

"Samuel," he answered.

When the woman saw Samuel, she shrieked and cried to Saul, "Why have you lied to me? You are Saul!"

"Do not be afraid," said the king. "What did you see?"

“I saw a spirit rise out of the ground,” said the woman.

“What did it look like?” asked Saul.

She said, “An old man is coming up here, dressed in a mantle.” Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed face to the ground in homage.

Samuel told Saul, “Why have you disturbed me and brought me up here?”

“I am in terrible trouble,” said Saul. “The Philistines are at war with me, and God has left me and will not answer me any longer, either by prophets or dreams. And so I called you, for you to tell me what I should do.”

Samuel answered, “Why are you asking me, if YHWH has left you and has become your enemy? YHWH has done for you as he foretold through me; he has torn the kingdom from your grasp and given it to your neighbor David. It was because you did not obey what YHWH told you and carry out his raging fury against Amalek that YHWH has done this to you today. And what is more, YHWH will hand over Israel along with you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me, while YHWH subjects the army to the power of the Philistines.”

Saul then fell full length on the ground, in terror at what Samuel had told him; and he completely without strength, because he had eaten nothing all that day and night. The woman came up to him, seeing his collapse, and said, “Remember, your slave obeyed what you said and put my life in your hands and listened to what you told me. Now you listen to your slave, please; and let me give you a piece of bread to eat, so that you will have the strength to go on.”

“I will not eat anything,” he said.

But when his slaves and the woman kept urging him, he finally listened, rose from the ground and sat on a couch. The woman had a calf she had been fattening in the house, which she hurriedly slaughtered; and then she took flour and kneaded it into unleavened bread, which she baked. She brought this to Saul and his slaves, and they ate it, and then rose and went away that night.

Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Master’s commands, and God transferred his kingdom to David.

Saul had not trusted the Master, and had turned to a medium for guidance, and God transferred his kingdom to David.

*Second Reading**A Homily by Paul VI*

“Not to report the Good News would be the end of me,” because the Prince himself sent me as his Emissary and witness. The more remote, the more difficult the assignment, the more “my love of God spurs me on.” I am bound to proclaim that Jesus is “the Prince, the Son of the living God.” Because of him, we come to know the God we cannot see; “he is the firstborn of all creation; in him everything finds its being.” He is man’s teacher and redeemer, who was born for us, died for us, and returned to life for us.

Everything and all of history converges in the Prince. Though he was a man of sorrow and hope, he knows us and loves us. He stays by us as our friend throughout our lives. At the end of time, he will come to be our judge, but we also know that he will be the complete fulfillment of our lives and our great happiness for all eternity.

I can never stop speaking of the Prince, because he is our truth and our light; “he is the way, and he is truth and life.” He is our bread, our source of living water who assuages our hunger and satisfies our thirst. He is our shepherd, our leader, our ideal, our comforter, and our brother.

He is like us, but more perfectly human: simple, poor, and humble—and yet, though burdened with work, he is more patient. He spoke on our behalf; he worked miracles; and he founded a new kingdom in which the poor are happy, peace is the foundation of a communal life, the pure of heart and those who are suffering are lifted up and comforted, the hungry find justice, sinners are forgiven, and all human beings discover that they are brothers.

The image I present to you is the image of Prince Jesus. As Christians, you share his name; he has already made most of you his own. So once again I repeat his name to you Christians and proclaim to everyone, Jesus the Prince is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, the Master of the new universe, and the great hidden key to human history and the part we play in it. He is the mediator—the bridge, if you will—between heaven and earth. Above all, he is the Son of man, more perfect than any man, because he is also the Son of God, and is eternal and infinite. He is the son of Mary his mother on earth, who is more remarkable than any woman; and she is our mother in the spiritual communion of the mystical body.

Remember: It is Prince Jesus I preach day in and day out. I would see his name echo and reecho for all time to the very ends of the earth.

Our Savior Prince Jesus has destroyed death, and through the Good News he has announced life and immortality, and we have all received some of what in him is complete; we have received as gifts what he has by right.

Everything was created through him and for him; he existed before everything that exists, and everything is held in being in him; and we have all received some of what in him is complete; we have received as gifts what he has by right.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you call your children to walk in the Prince's light, please free us from darkness and keep us in the radiance of your truth. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

*1 Samuel 31.1-4, 2 Samuel 1.1-16*

The Philistines attacked Israel, which fled from them, with many casualties on Mount Gilboa; and the Philistines pursued Saul and his sons closely, and killed his sons Jonathan, Aminadab, and Malchishua. As the battle raged around Saul, the archers hit him, severely wounding him. Saul told his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or the uncircumcised men will come and torture me." But the armor-bearer, who was badly frightened, refused; and so Saul took his own sword and fell on it.

After Saul's death, David returned from his defeat of the Amalekites, and spent two days in Ziklag. On the third day, there came up a man from Saul's camp, with torn clothes and dirt on his face. He went up to David and prostrated himself in homage. David asked, "Where have you come from?"

“I escaped from the Israelite camp,” he answered.

“How did things go?” asked David. “Tell me.”

“The soldiers were routed,” he answered, “and many of them have fallen and are dead; and Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead.”

“How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?” asked David.

“I just happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, and the chariots and cavalry were closing in on him. He looked back and saw me and called to me, and I answered, ‘Present.’ He said, ‘Who are you?’ and I answered, ‘An Amalekite,’ and he told me, ‘Would you stand over me and finish me off, please, because I am in terrible pain, and am still alive.’ So I came up to him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live with the wounds he had. Then I took the crown off his head and the bracelet on his arm and brought them here to my master.”

David then grasped his clothes and tore them, and so did all the men with him; and they grieved and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, for YHWH’s soldiers, and for the house of Israel that had fallen by the sword.

Then David asked the young man who had informed him, “Where are you from?”

“I am the son of a foreigner,” he answered. “An Amalekite.”

“How was it,” David asked, “that you were not afraid to raise your hand to destroy the one anointed by YHWH?” David then called over one of the attendants, and told him, “Go over and execute him.” The young man gave him a mortal blow. “Your blood is on your own head,” said David, “because your own mouth testified against you and admitted that you killed the one anointed by YHWH.”

Mountains of Gilboa, may dew and rain stay off your slopes, because there the heroes of Israel fell in battle.

Let the Master come to all the mountains surrounding you, but as for you Mountains of Gilboa, he will pass you by, because there the heroes of Israel fell in battle.

*Second Reading*

*A Sermon by St. Augustine*

The words we have sung contain our assertion that we are God’s

flock: “He is the Master God who made us.” He is our God, “and we are the people in his pasture and the sheep his hand leads on.” Human shepherds did not make the sheep they own; they did not create the sheep they are feeding. But our Master God made the sheep which he has and feeds for himself because he is God and Creator; no one else created the sheep he feeds, and no one else pastures the sheep he created.

In this song, we have stated that we are his flock, the sheep in his pasture, and the sheep his hands lead on. And so let us listen to the words he speaks to us as his sheep—he was speaking to the shepherds earlier, but now he is speaking to the sheep. We listened to those earlier words of his, and we shepherds shook with fear; but you listened without a qualm.

What is to happen when we hear these words today? Are we shepherds to be unperturbed while you quake in fear? Not at all. We are shepherds, and the shepherd listens and shakes in fear not only at what is said to the shepherds, but at what is said to the sheep too; if he does listen unperturbed to what is said to his sheep, he does not care about them.

Also, we asked you on that earlier occasion to remember two points about us: that we are Christians, and second, that we are placed in charge. Because we are placed in charge, we are ranked as shepherds, if we are good; but because we are Christians, we are also members of the flock along with you. And so, whether the Master is speaking to the shepherds or the sheep, we must listen to everything he says and quake with fear; our hearts must always remain concerned.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, we should listen to the words the Master uses to reprimand the evil sheep, and to the promises he makes to his own flock. “You are my sheep,” he says. Even in the midst of this life of tears and troubles, it is such great happiness and joy to realize that we are God’s flock! The words, “You are the shepherd of Israel,” were spoken to him; it was said of him, “Israel’s guardian will not fall asleep, and will not become drowsy.” He keeps watch over us when we are awake, and is watching over us as we sleep. A flock that belongs to a man feels safe in the care of its human shepherd; we should feel that much safer when our shepherd is God. Not only does he lead us to pasture; he even created us.

“You are my sheep, says the Master God. Now I am discriminating

between one and other, and between rams and goats.” What are goats doing here in God’s flock? In the same pastures and at the same streams, goats, even though they are destined for the left, mix with those on the right. They are tolerated now, but will be separated later. In this way, the patience of the flock develops and becomes like God’s own patience, because he is the one who will do the separating, and put some on the left and others on the right.

My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them and they follow me, and they will never be lost, and no one will ever take them out of my hands.

I will pasture my sheep myself, and I myself will give them rest, and they will never be lost, and no one will ever take them out of my hands.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you call your children to walk in the Prince’s light, please free us from darkness and keep us in the radiance of your truth. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## Tuesday

#### First Reading

2 Samuel 2.1-11, 3.1-5

David consulted YHWH and asked, “Should I go up into any of the cities of Judah?” and YHWH told him, “Go.”

“But where should I go?” asked David.

“To Hebron,” was the answer.

So David went there, accompanied by his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel. David also took with him the men who had been his companions, with their families, and they lived in the cities around Hebron.

Men of Judah then came up and anointed David king of Judah, and informed David that the men of Jabesh-gilead had buried Saul, whereupon David sent messengers to Jabesh-gilead and said, “YHWH shower blessings on you, because you have shown this kindness to your master



Saul by burying him. May YHWH now show kindness and faithfulness to you; and I will also be generous to you because of what you have done. Take courage, therefore, and be strong, because even though your master Saul is dead, the Judahites have anointed me their king.”

Abner son of Ner, however, Saul’s general, took Saul’s son Ishbosheth and brought him over to Mahanaim, where he made him king over Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and the rest of Israel. Saul’s son Ishbosheth was forty years old when he started his reign over Israel, and his reign lasted two years; only the house of Judah followed David, who reigned as king in Hebron over the house of Judah for seven years and six months.

There followed a prolonged war between the house of Saul and the house of David, in which David grew stronger, while the house of Saul weakened.

Sons were born to David in Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon from the Jezreelite Ahinoam, his second Chileab from Abigail, the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, his third Absalom from Maacah, the daughter of the king of Geshur Talmi, the fourth Adonijah, the son of Haggith, the fifth Shephatiah, son of Abital, and the sixth Ithream from David’s with Eglah. These were the ones born to David in Hebron.

The scepter will not pass out of Judah, and the kingly mace will not go from between his feet until the coming of the one I promised you; he will be the desire of nations.

Your brothers will praise you, and your father’s sons will bow down in worship before you, until the coming of the one I promised you; he will be the desire of nations.

*Second Reading*

*A Sermon by St. Augustine*

“This is our pride: the testimony of our consciences.” There are men who make rash judgments, and who slander, gossip and complain, who are ready to suspect what they do not see, and eager to report things they do not even have a suspicion of. What defense is there against men of this sort except the testimony of our own conscience?

My brothers and sisters, we are not searching—nor should we be searching—for our own reputation even among those whose good will we desire. What we should be looking for is their rescue, so that if we

conduct ourselves as we should, they will not go astray in following us. They should imitate us if we are imitators of the Prince; and if we are not, they should still imitate him; he cares for his flock, and he is the only one who is to be found with those who care for their flocks, since they are all in him.

And so we are looking for no advantage for ourselves when we aim to please other people; we want to take pleasure in men, and we find our pleasure when they take pleasure in what is good, not because this elevates us, but because it benefits them.

It is clear who is intended by the Emissary Paul: "If I wanted to please men, I would not be the Prince's slave." He also says something similar: "Be pleasing to men in everything, in the same way that I please everyone in every way." Yet his words are as clear as water, crystalline, undisturbed, and unclouded. And so you should feed on and drink his message, like sheep; do not trample it or muddy it.

You have listened to our Master Prince Jesus as he taught his Emissaries, "Your actions are to shine in front of others so that they will see your good deeds and give praise to your Father in heaven," because it is the Father who made you to be what you are. "We are the people in his pasture, the sheep his hand leads on." And so if you are good, the praise belongs to the one who made you this way; it is no credit to you, because if you were left to yourself, you could only be immoral.

So then why are you trying to pervert the truth, when you want to be praised when you do good, and why do you blame God when you do what is wrong? That is, even though he said, "Your actions are to shine in front of others," he said in the same Sermon on the Mount, "Do not parade your good deeds in front of others." So if you think there are contradictions in St. Paul, you will find the same in the Good News; but if you keep from disturbing the water in your heart, you will recognize here the peace of the Scriptures and with it you will have peace.

And so, my brothers and sisters, our concern should not simply be to live as we ought, but to do it in the sight of others also; we should not only have a good conscience, we should also, as far as we can in our weakness, as far as we can control our frailty, do nothing that might lead a weak brother of ours into thinking badly of us. Otherwise, as we eat in the good pasture and drink the pure water, we might be trampling on God's meadow, and weaker sheep will have to feed on trampled grass

and drink from muddy water.

Please fill me with happiness by having the same mind and the same love; humbly consider others as better than yourselves; do not think only of your own interests, and look to the interests of others.

Support the weak, be patient with everyone; try to do what is good for each other and for every human being. Do not think only of your own interests, and look to the interests of others.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you call your children to walk in the Prince's light, please free us from darkness and keep us in the radiance of your truth. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### First Reading

#### 2 Samuel 4.2-5.7

Saul's son Ishbaal had two captains named Baanah and Rechab, who were sons of the Beerothite Rimmon, and belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. Beeroth was also a member of Benjamin, since the Beerothites escaped to Gittim, and have stayed there as resident aliens to this day. Saul's son Jonathan had a son named Merbbaal, whose feet were crippled. When he was five years old and the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, his nurse picked him up and fled, but in their hurry, he fell and became lame.

The sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, came into Ishbaal's house during the day while he was taking a nap and the portress had also dozed off while sifting wheat, and was asleep—so that Rechab and Baanah were able to slip by her and enter the house while Ishbaal was lying asleep in his bedroom. They killed him with their sword, and then cut off his head, which they took with them on their journey on the Arabah road all that night.

They then brought the head of Ishbaal to David in Hebron and told

the king, “Here is the head of Ishbaal, the son of your enemy Saul, who was trying to kill you; and it was in this way that YHWH avenged my master the king today on Saul and his posterity.”

“As surely as YHWH is alive,” said David to Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, “who rescued me from all my troubles, in Ziklag I had the man who informed me of Saul’s death arrested and executed, even though he thought he was the bearer of good news that deserved a reward. All the more now, when you good-for-nothings have killed an innocent man in bed at home, am I going to hold you responsible for his death and remove you from this earth!”

Then at a command from David, his assistants killed them and cut off their hands and feet to hang near the pool in Hebron. But he took the head of Ishbaal and buried it in Abner’s grave in Hebron.

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron and said, “Remember, we are your bone and your flesh; and in past times when Saul was our king, you were the one who led the Israelites out and brought them back safe. YHWH also told you that you would be the shepherd of his people Israel and would command Israel. So when all the elders of Israel came up to David in Hebron, King David made a pact with them there in YHWH’s presence, and they anointed him King of Israel. David was thirty years old when he became king, and his reign lasted forty years: seven years and six months in Hebron over Judah, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem over all Israel and Judah.

After this, the King and his men left for Jerusalem against the Jebusites who lived in the area. David was told, “You cannot come in here; the blind and the lame will drive you off!” which was their way of saying that David would not be able to enter there. But David did that the stronghold of Zion, which became the city of David.

The kings of the earth have come out in revolt, and their rulers are conspiring against the Master and the Prince he anointed. I am the one who enthroned this king of mine on my holy mountain Zion.

Why are the nations in turmoil and their peoples hatching useless plots? I am the one who enthroned this King of mine on my holy mountain Zion.

*Second Reading**The Way of Perfection by St. Teresa of Avila*

When someone is asking a favor of a person of importance, would he be so rude and thoughtless as not first to consider how best to approach him to make a good impression and give him no grounds for offense? Obviously, he would think over his plea carefully as well as his reasons for making it, especially if it were for something specific and important as our good that Jesus tells us our prayers should be.

It seems to me that this point deserves serious attention. My Master, could you not have included everything in one phrase by saying, "Father, please give us whatever is good for us"? After all, to one who understands everything, what need is there to say more?

Eternal Wisdom, between you and your Father, that was enough; that was how you prayed in the garden. You expressed your desire and fear, but surrendered yourself to his will. But in our case, my Master, you know that we are less submissive to the will of your Father, and need to mention each thing separately so that we will stop and think whether it would be good for us, and if not, not ask for it. You see, the gift our Master intends for us may be by far the best, but if it is not what we wanted, we are quite capable of flinging it back in his face. That is the kind of people we are; cash is the only wealth we understand.

And so the good Jesus advises us to repeat these words in his prayer for his kingdom to come in us: "May your name be held in reverence; come to us and rule over us." See how wise our Master is! But what do we mean when we pray for this kingdom? That is what I am going to consider now, because it is important for us to understand it. Our good Jesus placed these two petitions side by side because he realized that in our inadequacy, we could never appropriately revere, praise, elevate, or glorify this holy name of the eternal Father unless he made us able to do so by giving us his kingdom here on earth. But since we have to know what we are asking for and how important it is to pray for it constantly and to do everything in our power to please the one who is to give it to us, I would like to give you my own thoughts on the subject now.

The greatest of the many joys to be found in the kingdom of heaven seems to me to be the sense of tranquillity and well-being that we experience when we are free from all concern about earthly things. Since we are happy because others are happy and are forever at peace, we have the deep satisfaction of seeing that the Master is honored and praised by

all creatures, and his name blessed. No one ever offends him, because there everyone loves him; loving him is the soul's one concern. In fact, it cannot help but love him, because it knows him. Here below, our love must necessarily fall short of that perfection and constancy; but even so, how different it would be, and how much more like heaven, if we really knew the Master!

The one who knows what is good to give his children advises us to ask, to search, and to knock. The more truly we believe, the more strongly we hope, and the more fervently we desire, the more generously we will receive.

In our pleas we receive more by sobs than by speech, more by tears than words. The more truly we believe, the more strongly we hope, and the more fervently we desire, the more generously we will receive.

*Prayer*

Dear Father, since you call your children to walk in the Prince's light, please free us from darkness and keep us in the radiance of your truth. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## Thursday

*First Reading*

*2 Samuel 6.1-23*

David again assembled all the selected men of Israel, thirty thousand of them, after which David and his company left for Baala in Judah to bring from there the Chest of God, the one carrying the name of YHWH of armies enthroned above the cherubim. God's Chest was placed on a new cart and taken from the house of Aminadab on the hill; Aminadab's sons Uzzah and Ahio guided the cart, with Ahio walking in front, while David and all the Israelites danced before YHWH with all their strength, singing and playing citharas, harps, tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals.

When they came to Nodan's threshing floor, Uzzah held out his hand to God's Chest to steady it, because the oxen were making it tip.

But YHWH was angry with Uzzah; God struck him on the spot, and he died there before God. David was shaken because YHWH had displayed his anger against Uzzah (for which the place has been called Perez-uzzah to this day), and David was fearful of YHWH and said, "How can YHWH's Chest come to me?" So David would not have YHWH's chest brought to him in the City of David and had it turned aside to the house of Obededom the Gittite.

YHWH's Chest remained in the house of Obededom the Gittite for three months, during which YHWH blessed Obededom and his whole household; and when it was reported to David that YHWH had blessed the family of Obededom and everything belonging to him, David left to bring YHWH's Chest from Obededom's house into the city of David with great pomp.

As soon as the bearers of YHWH's Chest had gone six steps, David sacrificed an ox and a sheep that had been fattened; and then, with a linen apron tied round him, he came dancing before YHWH with all his might, as he and the Israelites were bringing up YHWH's Chest with trumpet blasts and shouts of joy.

As YHWH's Chest entered the City of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked down through a window and saw King David leaping and dancing before YHWH, and she secretly despised him.

YHWH's Chest was brought in and set in its place inside the tent David had set up for it; and then David offered holocausts and peace offerings before YHWH. After he had finished making these offerings, he blessed the people in the name of YHWH leader of armies, and then distributed through all the people a loaf of bread, a cut of roast meat, and a raisin cake to each man, woman, and child in the entire throng of Israel, after which all the people left for their homes.

When David returned to bless his own family, Saul's daughter Michal came out to meet him and said, "So! The king of Israel has done honor to himself today, exposing himself to the sight of his followers' slave girls, like any commoner!"

"I was dancing before YHWH," answered David. "And as surely as YHWH is alive, who preferred me to your father and his whole family when he made me commander of YHWH's people Israel, I will not only join in the celebrations before YHWH, I will lower myself even farther. I will be of no account in your eyes, but the slave girls you spoke of will

hold me in respect and honor.” And therefore, Saul’s daughter Michal was childless until the day of her death.

Please come forward, Master, and you and the Chest of your power go to the place of your rest. May your priests be dressed in virtue and your sacred people shout for joy.

Raise your heads, gates, and lift yourselves up, you ancient doors, to let the King of Glory enter. May your priests be dressed in virtue and your sacred people shout for joy.

*Second Reading*      *A Sermon on Psalm 41 by St. Jerome at a Bath*

“My soul is yearning for you, my God, as much as a deer yearns for running water.” Just as a deer yearns for running water, our newly bathed members, our young deer, so to speak, are yearning for God. By leaving Egypt and the world, they have put Pharaoh and his entire army to death in the water of the Bath; and after they killed the devil, their hearts are yearning for the springs of running water in the Church.

These springs are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jeremiah attests that the Father is like a fountain when he says, “They have abandoned me, though I am the fountain of living water, to dig cisterns for themselves, and broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” In another passage, we read about the Son, “They have abandoned the fountain of wisdom.” And again, John says of the Holy Spirit, “If anyone drinks the water I give him, that water will become a fountain of water inside him, gushing up into eternal life.” The evangelist explains that the Savior said this of the Holy Spirit; and so the evidence of these texts establishes beyond doubt that the three fountains of the Church constitute the mystery of the Trinity.

This is the water that the believer’s heart yearns for; this is the water that the newly bathed yearns for when he says, “My heart is thirsty for God, the living fountain.” This is not a weak, faint desire to see God; the newly bathed actually are on fire with desire and thirst for God. Before they received the Bath, they would ask each other, “When am I go to and see God’s face?” and now their request has been answered. They have come forward, and they stand in the presence of God; they have come before the altar and have looked upon the mystery of the Savior.

Since they have received the Prince’s body and been reborn in the



water that gives life, they speak up boldly and say, “I will go into God’s marvelous residence, into his house.” The house of God is the Church, which is his marvelous residence, filled with happy voices expressing thanks and praise, and filled with all the sounds of joyous celebration.

This is the way you should talk, those of you who are just bathed, because you have now been dressed in the Prince. Under our guidance, by the utterance of God you have been lifted out of the dangerous water of this world like so many fish; the nature of things has been changed in us. Fish taken out of the ocean die; but the Emissaries have fished for us and have removed us from the sea of this world so that we could be brought from death to life. As long as we were in the world, our eyes looked down into the pit, and we lived in filth. After we were rescued from the waves, we began to view the sun and look up at the true light. In our confusion at so much joy, we say, “Hope in God, because I will be praising him again, in the presence of my Savior and my God.”

I ask one thing of the Master; I am searching for this: to live in the Master’s house all the days of my life.

So that I can contemplate the Master’s beauty and look for him in his Temple, to live in the Master’s house all the days of my life.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since you call your children to walk in the Prince’s light, please free us from darkness and keep us in the radiance of your truth. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### *First Reading*

*2 Samuel 7.1-25*

When King David was settled in his palace, and YHWH had given him a respite from the enemies that surrounded him, he said to the prophet Nathan, “Here I am living in a house of cedar, while God’s Chest has a tent for its home!”

Nathan replied, “Go do what your heart prompts, because YHWH

is with you.”

That night, however, YHWH told Nathan, “Go tell my slave David, ‘This is what is said by YHWH: “Are you to build me a house for my home? I have not lived in a house from the day I led the descendants of Israel out of Egypt until now, and have been traveling in a tent under cloth. In all my wanderings with the descendants of Israel, did I ever said a word to anyone from any of the tribes of Israel that I commanded to shepherd them, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’”

“So now tell my slave David this: ‘This is what YHWH of armies says: “I was the one who took you from feeding and tending a flock to be the commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and have destroyed all the enemies in your path; and I will make you as famous as the earth’s great ones. I will establish a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they can live in their place without further disturbance, and evil people will not harass them as they used to do since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from your enemies.

““YHWH also reveals to you that he will found a house for you; and when your time comes and you go to rest with your ancestors, I will bring forward your heir after you, a man who is your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom firm. He is the one who is to build a house for my name; and I will make his royal throne firm forever; I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to me, and if he does wrong, I will correct him with a human rod and punish him with human punishment; but I will not withdraw my favor from him as I withdrew my favor from your predecessor Saul, whom I removed from my presence. Your house and your kingdom will last forever in my presence; your throne will stand firm forever.”

Nathan reported all these words and his entire vision to David.

David then entered and sat before YHWH and said, “Who am I, God YHWH, and who are the members of my household, for you to bring me to this point? And yet you see even this as too little, God YHWH; you have also told about your slave’s household for years to come; you have show this also to a human being, God YHWH! What more can David say to you? You know your slave, God YHWH. You have brought about this whole magnificent disclosure to your slave for your slave’s sake, and as your own heart desired.

“And that is why you are great, God YHWH! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, just as we heard tell. What other nation on earth is there like your people Israel, who has had God as its leader, redeeming it as his people? You have made yourself famous by doing this magnificent deed and by doing awesome things as you cleared nations and their gods out of the way of your people, whom you redeemed for yourself out of Egypt! You have established your people Israel for yourself as yours forever, and you have become their God, YHWH. And now, God YHWH, please confirm for all time the prophesy you made about your slave and his household, and do what you promised him.”

The angel Gabriel spoke to Mary, and said, “You will become pregnant and bear a son, and the Master God will give him the throne of his ancestor David, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever.”

The Master took an oath to David which he will not recant: “I will set your own son on your throne, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever.”

*Second Reading      The Predestination of the Saints by St. Augustine*

The greatest glory of predestination and grace is the Savior himself, “the liaison between God and men, the man Jesus, the Prince.” What, I ask you, did his human nature do beforehand in the way of good deeds or faith to deserve this glory? Give me an answer to this question: How did this humanity earn the right to be take up by the Word, who is coeternal with the Father, into unity with his person, and so be the only Son God ever fathered? What goodness of any sort did he possess beforehand? What had he done or what faith had he shown, what request had he made, that he would reach this pinnacle of preeminence beyond all human power of description. Was it not through the action of the Word in taking this humanity to himself that, from the moment he came into existence, this human being came into existence as the only Son of God?

We must keep before our eyes the very source of grace, which takes its origin in our head the Prince, and flows through all the parts of his body in accordance with the capacity of each of them. The grace which makes any man a Christian from the first moment of his coming to

believe is the same grace which made this man the Prince from his coming into existence as a man.

The Spirit through whom men are reborn is the same Spirit through whom the Prince was born; the Spirit by whom we receive forgiveness of sins is the same Spirit who brought it about that the Prince knew no sin. Clearly, God knew that he would do all this; the predestination of the saints is the same predestination that reached its greatest glory in the Saint above all other saints. Can anyone of those who correctly understand the utterances of Truth deny this? After all, we have been taught that because of the fact that the Son of God became man, the Master of glory himself was the object of predestination.

Jesus, then, was predestined. The one who was to be the son of David in his human nature was to be the Son of God in power through the action of the Spirit of holiness, because he was engendered by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary. This unique assumption of a human nature for himself by God the Word came about in such a way, too mysterious for our understanding, that with truth and accuracy the Word could be called at one and the same time the Son of God and the son of man: son of man because of the human nature that was taken, and Son of God because it was the only Son God fathered who took that human nature. We are to believe in God as a trinity, not a quaternity.

In this case, human nature was predestined to so marvelous, sublime, and perfect a dignity that it could not be raised higher—and in the same way, the divine nature itself could not demean itself any lower than by taking human nature with all its weakness, even to dying on a cross. In the same way that a single Prince was predestined to be our head, the many people we are were predestined to be parts of the body. There is to be no mention here of human rights or deserts; they were lost in Adam; God's grace is to reign supreme, as it does through Prince Jesus, the only Son of God, the one Master. If anyone can find in our head the Prince anything to make us deserve this preceding Jesus's individual birth, he can also look for what makes us deserve it in ourselves preceding our rebirth as the many parts of his body.

When the designated time had finally come, God sent his Son into the world, born to a virgin, and subject to the Law, to redeem those who were subject to the Law.

Because of his great love for us, God sent his Son in the form of our sinful human nature to redeem those who were subject to the Law.

*Prayer*

Dear Father, since you call your children to walk in the Prince's light, please free us from darkness and keep us in the radiance of your truth. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



*First Reading*

*2 Samuel 11.1-17,26-27*

As Spring came, when kings go out on campaign, David sent Joab along with his officers and the army of Israel, and they devastated the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah, while David remained in Jerusalem.

One evening, David rose from his nap and was walking about on the roof of his palace, and from the roof he saw a very beautiful woman bathing. David had inquiries made about the woman, and was told, "She is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, and wife of Joab's armor-bearer Uriah the Hittite."

David then sent messengers, and brought her to him, and had sex with her at a time when she was just purified after her monthly period. After this, she returned to her house; but she had become pregnant, and sent the information to David, "I am going to have a child."

At this, David sent a message to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite," and so Joab sent Uriah to David, and when he came, David questioned him about Joab, the soldiers, and how the war was going, and Uriah answered that everything was going well. David then said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, now, and bathe your feet." Uriah left the palace, with a gift of food from the king's table; but Uriah slept at the entrance of the royal palace with the other officers of his master, and did not go into his own house.

When David was told that Uriah had not gone home, he told him, "You have come from a journey, have you not? Then why did you not

go down to your own house?”

“The Chest and Israel and Judah are living in tents,” answered Uriah, “and my master Joab and your majesty’s servants are encamped in the open field. Can I go home to eat and sleep with my wife? As surely as YHWH is alive and you are alive, I will do no such thing.”

“Stay here today also,” said David. “I will send you off tomorrow.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day; and on the following day, David sent for him and he had dinner with David, who made him drunk; but in the evening, he went out to sleep on his bed among the master’s servants, and did not go down to his home.

The next morning, David wrote a letter to Joab, which he sent by Uriah, and in it he gave this order: “Put Uriah up front, where the fighting is fierce, and then pull back and leave him to be killed.” So while Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew the defenders were strong; and when the men of the city made a sortie against Joab, some officers of David’s army fell, and among them Uriah the Hittite died.

When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband had died, she mourned her master; but once the mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her into his house, where she became his wife and bore him a son.

But YHWH was displeased with what David had done.

You had Uriah the Hittite killed in battle, and took his wife as your own. Why, then, have you shown contempt for the Master by doing what is evil in his sight?

I am the Master, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. You are not to kill; you are not to commit adultery. Why, then, have you shown contempt for the Master by doing what is evil in his sight?

*Second Reading A Catechetical Instruction by St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

If there is any slave of sin present here, he should immediately prepare himself through faith for the rebirth into freedom that makes us God’s adopted children. He should take off the misery of slavery to sin and put on the joyful slavery to the Master, so that he will be granted the privilege of inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven. By admitting your sins,

you strip off your former self, which is tempted by destructive desires, and put on the new self, which is renewed in the image of its Creator. Through faith, accept the pledge of the Holy Spirit, so that you will be welcomed into your eternal home; come close, to be marked with the supernatural seal, so that you will be able to be recognized easily by your Master; become a member of the Prince's holy, spiritual flock, so that some day you will be set apart on his right and so gain the life that was prepared as your inheritance.

Those whose sins still stick to them like a goatskin will stand on the left because they did not approach the Prince's spring of rebirth to receive God's grace. By "rebirth," I do not mean rebirth of the body, but the spiritual rebirth of the soul; our bodies are brought into being by parents who can be seen, but our souls are reborn through faith: "The Spirit breathes where he pleases." In the end, if you come to deserve it, you will hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful slave"; and that is when you are found with no stain of hypocrisy on your conscience.

If anyone present here is thinking of presuming upon God's grace, he is deceiving himself, and does not understand the nature of things. You are only a man; there is someone who scrutinizes men's thoughts and hearts. You must keep your soul innocent and free from deceit.

The present is a time for admitting sins. Admit what you have done, in your words or actions, during the night or day. Admit your sins at a time of God's favor, and on the day of your rescue, you will receive the treasures of heaven.

Wash yourselves clean, so that you will hold a richer fund of grace. Sins are forgiven equally for everyone, but unity in the Holy Spirit is given in proportion to each person's faith. If you have done little work, you will receive little; if you have achieved a great deal, your reward will be great. The race you are running is for your own benefit; look after your own interests.

If you have a grudge against anyone, forgive him; you are drawing near to forgiveness for your own sins, and so you must forgive those who have sinned against you.

One who keeps his sins hidden will not prosper; one who confesses and renounces them will find mercy.

If we admit our sins, then God, who is faithful and just, will forgive

## 200 Thirteenth Week of Ordinary Time

us; one who confesses and renounces them will find mercy.

### Prayer

Dear Father, since you call your children to walk in the Prince's light, please free us from darkness and keep us in the radiance of your truth. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



# FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## *First Reading*

*2 Samuel 12.1-25*

YHWH sent Nathan to David, and when he arrived, he said, “Once there were two men, one rich and one poor; the rich man had a huge number of flocks and herds, and the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and fed, and which grew up together with him and his children. It ate his own food and drank from his own cup, and slept on his lap, and was like a daughter to him.

“A traveler visited the rich man; but instead of taking something from his own flocks and herds to prepare a meal for the visitor, he took the poor man’s lamb and slaughtered it for the man who had come to him.”

David was enraged at the man, and told Nathan, “As surely as YHWH is alive, the man who did this must die! And he will pay back the lamb four times over, because he did this without pity!”

“You are the man,” Nathan told David. “This is what is said by YHWH, the God of Israel: ‘I anointed you king over Israel and saved you from Saul’s persecution; I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives for your own; I gave you the house of Israel and Judah—and if this is not enough, I could add still more. Then why have you disregarded YHWH’s commandment and done evil in his sight? You had Uriah the Hittite killed in battle; you took his wife as your wife and had him killed in the fighting with the people of Ammon. And so for this, your household will never be free of fighting; it is because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ And this is what YHWH says, ‘Now I will bring trouble on you from your own household; I will take your wives from before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he will have sex with your wives in broad daylight.

You have done this deed secretly, but I will do what I will do before all of Israel, in the light of day.”

David then said to Nathan, “I have sinned against YHWH.”

Nathan answered, “YHWH, then, has forgiven your sins; you will not die. But since you have shown complete contempt for YHWH by this deed, the child born to you will certainly die.” Nathan then left for his house.

And YHWH laid his hand upon the child that the wife of Uriah had borne to David, and he became desperately ill; and David pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and lay all night on the ground. The elders in the house came forward to him to try to raise him from the ground, but he would not, and would not eat with them.

On the seventh day, the child died; but David’s servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, and said, “When the child was alive and we spoke to him, he would not listen to what we said; how can we tell him that the child is dead? He might do something terrible!”

But David noticed the servants whispering to each other, and realized that the child was dead. He asked them, “Is the child dead?”

“He is dead,” they answered.

Then David rose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes, and went to YHWH’s house to worship. When he returned to his own house, where he had asked for food to be prepared for him, he ate. His servants said, “What are you doing? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept and refused to sleep, and now that he is dead, you have risen and taken food.”

“While the child was alive,” answered David, “I fasted and wept with the idea that perhaps YHWH would grant me the child’s life; but now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.”

Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went and had sex with her, and she conceived and bore him a son, who was named Solomon. YHWH loved him and sent the prophet Nathan to name him Jedidiah on behalf of YHWH.

My sins are more numerous than the sand in the sea, and I have been disobedient many times; I have no right to raise my eyes to the heights of heaven because of the countless insults I have committed, because I

have provoked your anger, and have done wrong in your presence.

I know my faults, and my sin is before me always, because I sinned against you alone, and have done wrong in your presence.

*Second Reading*

*A Sermon by St. Augustine*

“I admit my disobedience,” says David. If I admit my fault, then you will pardon it. We should never assume that if we live good lives, we will be without sin; our lives should be praised only when we keep begging for pardon.

And men are hopeless creatures, and the less they concentrate on their own sins, the more interested they are in the sins of others. They like to criticize, not correct; since they cannot excuse themselves, they are ready to accuse others. This was not the way David showed us how to pray and make amends to God, when he said, “I admit my disobedience, and my sin is always before me.” He did not focus on others’ sins; he turned his thoughts upon himself. He did not merely scratch the surface; he plunged inside and went deep down within himself; he did not spare himself, and so was not impudent in asking to be spared.

Do you want God to be mollified? Learn what you are to do so that God will be pleased with you. Consider the psalm again: “If you wanted sacrifice, I would certainly have made it; but you take no pleasure in holocausts.” Then are you to be without sacrifice? Are you to offer nothing? Will you please God without an offering? Consider what you read in the same psalm: “If you wanted sacrifice, I would certainly have made it; but you take no pleasure in holocausts.” But keep listening, and say with David, “A sacrifice to God is a remorseful spirit; God does not despise a remorseful, humble heart.”

You now have the offering you are to make. There is no need to look over the herd or to outfit ships and travel to far-off provinces in search of incense. Search within your heart for what is pleasing to God; your heart must be crushed. Are you afraid that it might die from this? You have the answer. “Please create a clean heart in me, my God.” For a clean heart to be created, the unclean one must be crushed.

We should be displeased with ourselves when we commit sin, because sin is displeasing to God. And even though we are sinful, let us at least be like God in this: that we are displeased at what displeases him; and to some degree you will then be in harmony with God’s will, because you

find displeasing in yourself what is abhorrent to your Creator.

My sins, my Master, have pierced through me like arrows; but before they wound me, please heal me, my God, with the ointment of repentance.

Please create a clean heart in me, my God, and put a new and firm spirit inside me. Please heal me, my God, with the ointment of repentance.

**Prayer**

Dear Father, since through the obedience of your servant and Son Jesus, you lifted up a fallen world, please free us from sin and bring the joy that lasts forever. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



**First Reading**

**2 Samuel 15.7-14, 16.5-13**

Absalom said to the king, “May I go to Hebron to fulfill a vow I made to YHWH? While I was living in Geshur in Aram, your servant made this vow: ‘If YHWH ever brings me back to Jerusalem, I will worship him in Hebron.’”

The king wished him a safe journey, and he left for Hebron; but then Absalom sent spies throughout the tribes of Israel to say, “When you hear the sound of a horn, proclaim Absalom king in Hebron.”

Two hundred men had gone with Absalom from Jerusalem; they had been invited and had gone in good faith, knowing nothing of this plan. Absalom also sent an invitation to David’s advisor Ahithophel the Gilonite to come from his town of Giloh for the sacrifices he was about to offer; and so the conspiracy gained strength, and the people with Absalom grew more numerous.

At this, an informant came to David with the report, “The Israelites have transferred their loyalty to Absalom!” David then told all of his servants who were with him in Jerusalem, “Come with me and flee, or

none of us will escape from Absalom. Leave immediately, to keep him from suddenly overtaking us and then devastating us and slaughtering the city.”

Zadok, with all the Levite bearers of the Chest of God’s Treaty, and Abiathar brought the Chest of God to a halt until the soldiers had marched out of the city. The king then told Zadok, “Take God’s Chest back to the city; if I find favor with YHWH, he will bring me back and allow me to see it and its lodging; but if he says he is not pleased with me, I am ready; let him do with me what he sees fit.”

The king also said to the priest Zadok, “See to it that you and Abiathar return to the city in peace, with both your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar’s son Jonathan. Remember, I will be waiting at the fords near the desert until word comes from you.” Zadok and Abiathar then took God’s Chest back to Jerusalem, where they remained; and as David went up the Mount of Olives, he kept weeping, with his head covered, and walking barefoot; and all those who were with him also had their heads covered and wept as they went.

As David neared Bahurim, a man named Shimei, the son of Gera who belonged to the same clan as Saul’s family, was leaving the place, cursing as he came. He threw stones at David and the king’s officers, and all of the entourage to his right and left. As Shimei cursed, he said, “Get out of here! Get out! You bloodthirsty devil! YHWH has paid you back for the blood of the family of Saul, whose throne you usurped! And now YHWH has handed over the kingdom to your son Absalom! You are caught in your own snare, you murderer!”

Abishai, son of Zeruiah, then said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my master the king? May I please go over and lop off his head?”

“What business of mine or yours is this, son of Zeruiah?” said the king. “Let him curse, because maybe YHWH has told him to curse David; and then who would dare to ask why he is doing it?” David added to Abishai and all his servants, “If my own son who came from my own body is trying to kill me, this Benjaminite has much more reason for doing it. Let him alone, and let him curse, because YHWH has told him to. It may be that YHWH will look on my trouble and repay today’s curses of his with benefits.” And as David and his men continued along the road, Shimei went along the hillside beside him, all the while cursing

and throwing stones and kicking the dirt as he went.

Even my closest friend, one I trusted, one who dined with me, has turned against me.

One of you who is eating with me is going to betray me; one who dined with me has turned against me.

*Second Reading                      A Letter to the Corinthians by St. Clement*

The command has been written, “Hold fast to the holy people, because those who cling to them will become holy.” There is also a passage in Scripture, which says, “You will be innocent with an innocent man, and you will be chosen with the chosen; but you will deal perversely with the perverse.”

So devote yourselves to those who are innocent and virtuous; they are God’s chosen people. Why is there fighting, rage, factions, and even wars among you? Do we not have the same Spirit of grace that was given us and the same calling in the Prince? Why do we tear the Prince’s body apart and divide it? Who do we revolt against our own body? We do we reach such a degree of madness that we forget that we are all parts of each other? Do not forget what was said by our Master Jesus: “That man is doomed! It would be better for him not to have been born than to be an obstacle to my chosen ones. It would actually be better for him to have a huge millstone around his neck and drowned in the ocean than to have him lead one of my chosen people astray.” Your choices have lead a great many people astray, have made many of them skeptical, have made many of them despair, and have brought grief on us all. And still your rebellion continues.

Pick up the letter of the blessed Emissary Paul. What did he write to you at the beginning of his service to you? Even then you had developed factions; and so Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote you about himself and Cephas and Apollos—but that division involved you in less serious sin, because you were supporting Emissaries of high reputation and a person vouched for by them.

We should put a stop to this division immediately. Let us prostrate ourselves before our Master and beg with tears for his mercy; and then he will become our friend again and restore us to the practice of brotherly love that is proper to us. You see, this is the gate of virtue that

leads to live, as it is written, “Please open the gates of virtue for me; and when I have gone in there, I will praise the Master. This is the Master’s gate, and virtuous people are to enter through it.”

There are many gates which stand open, but the gate of virtue is the Prince’s gate, and everyone who enters through this gate has received a blessing, because he goes his way in holiness and virtue and performs his duties without discord. A person may be faithful, he may have power to utter hidden secrets, he may be able to discern what is said, and be pure in his actions; but the greater he seems to be, the more humbly he ought to act, and the more zealous he should be for the common good rather than his own interests.

Though I do not belong to anyone, I have become a slave to everyone; I became weak to the weak; I became everything to everyone, so that I could save at least some of them.

I was eyes for the blind and feet for the lame; I was a father to the poor; I became everything to everyone, so that I could save at least some of them.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since through the obedience of your servant and Son Jesus, you lifted up a fallen world, please free us from sin and bring the joy that lasts forever. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



#### *First Reading*

*2 Samuel 18.6-17, 24-19.5*

David took the field against Israel in the forest near Mahanaim. The forces of Israel were defeated by David’s servants, and there were heavy casualties that day: twenty thousand men. The battle spread over that whole region, and the woods ate up more people that day than did swords.

Absalom, riding a mule, came up against David’s servants, and as the

mule passed under the branches of a large terebinth, his head caught in the tree and left him hanging in mid-air when the mule went out from under him. Someone saw this and reported to Joab that he had seen Absalom hanging from a terebinth. Joab told him, "If you saw him, why didn't you strike him dead then and there? I would have given you ten silver pieces and a belt!"

"Even if I had a thousand silver pieces in my hand, I would not harm the king's son, because the king ordered you and Abishai and Ittai in our hearing to protect young Absalom for his sake. If I had been disloyal and killed him, the whole thing would have come to the king's attention, and you would have denounced me yourself."

"I am not going to waste time with you!" said Joab, and he took three spears in his hand and stabbed them through Absalom's heart while he was still hanging alive from the terebinth tree. Ten of Joab's other young men closed in and finished him off.

Joab then blew his trumpet, and the soldiers turned back from their pursuit of the Israelites, because Joab had ordered a halt. Absalom was taken down and thrown into a deep pit in the forest, where a huge mound of stones was erected over him; and all the Israelites fled to their tents.

David was seated between two gates, and a lookout mounted to the roof of the gate above the city wall, where he searched the area and saw a man running alone; he shouted his report to the king, who said, "If he is alone, he has good news to report." As he neared, the lookout saw another runner, and called out from atop the gate, "There is another man running alone!" "That is good news too," said David. The lookout then said, "The first runner is running like Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok." The king answered, "He is a good man; he is coming with good news."

Ahimaaz then called out to the king, and bowed to the ground in homage to him, and said, "May your God YHWH be blessed, because the men who rebelled against my master the king have been defeated!"

"Is young Absalom safe?" asked the king.

"I saw a commotion when the king's servant Joab sent your servant on, but I do not know what it was," he answered.

"Step aside and remain in attendance here," said the king. And so he stepped aside and waited there.

When the Cushite came in, he said, "May my master the king accept



the good news that on this day YHWH has taken your side, and freed you from the grasp of everyone who rebelled against you.”

“Is young Absalom safe,” asked the king.

The Cushite answered, “May the enemies of my master the king and everyone who maliciously rebels against you be like that young man!”

The king was shaken, and went up to the room over the city gate, and wept, saying as he did so, “My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!”

Joab was told that the king was weeping and mourning for Absalom; and that day’s victory was turned into grieving for the whole army when they heard that the king was mourning his son. The soldiers crept into the city that day as if they had been disgraced by fleeing from the battle. Meanwhile, the king covered his face and wailed, “My son Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!”

If an enemy had come out against me, I could have endured it; but it was you, my closest friend, whose companionship I enjoyed, who have turned against me.

The king was shaken and went up to the room over the city gate and wept, and as he went, he wailed, “But it was you, my closest friend, whose companionship I enjoyed, who have turned against me.”

*Second Reading*

*A Discourse on the Psalms by St. Augustine*

We beg you, my brothers and sisters, as earnestly as we can, to have love, not only for each other, but for those outside the Church. Some of these people are still pagans who have not yet made an act of faith in the Prince; others are separated, in the sense that they are joined with us in professing a faith in the Prince, but are divided from the unity of his body. My friends, we must grieve over these people as we do over our brothers; because whether they like it or not, they are our brothers, and they will only stop being so when they no longer say “Our Father.”

The prophet refers to some men by saying, “When they tell you that you are not their brothers, you are to tell them that they are our brothers.” Consider who he was referring to by these words. Were they pagans? Hardly; because nowhere either in Scripture or in our usual way of speaking do we find them called our brothers. Nor could it refer to the Jews, who did not believe in the Prince. Read St. Paul, and you will

see that when he speaks of “brothers” without any qualification, he is always referring to Christians. For example, he says, “Why are you setting standards for your brother, and why do you despise your brother?” And again, “You do harm and cheat, and do this against your brothers.”

So those who tell us we are “not their brothers” are saying that we are pagans; and that is why they want to bathe us again, since they claim that we do not have what they can give—which gives rise to the error that we are not their brothers. But then why did the prophet tell us, “Tell them they are your brothers.” It is because we acknowledge in them something that we do not repeat; by not recognizing our Bath, they deny that we are their brothers, but when we do not repeat their Bath and accept it as our own, we are telling them they are our brothers.

If they say, “Why are you looking for us? What do you want from us?” We should answer, “You are our brothers.” They may say, “Leave us alone; we have nothing to do with you.” But we have everything to do with them, because we are united in our belief in the Prince; and so we should be in one body, under one head.

And so, dear brothers, we are pleading to you on their behalf, in the name of the very source of our love, by whose milk we are nourished and whose bread is our strength, in the name of our Master the Prince and his gentle love. It is now time for us to show them great love and overflowing kindness by praying to God for them.

May he some day give them a clear mind to change their way of thinking and realize that they have nothing whatever to say against the truth; they have now nothing but the sickness of their hatred, and the stronger they think they are, the weaker they become. We beg you to pray for them, because they are weak, and given to material wisdom, to material and fleshy things; but still they are our brothers. They celebrate the same sacraments as we do, not, of course, with us, but still the same ones. They respond with the same Amen—not with us, but still the same one. And so pour out your hearts for them in prayer to God.


I beg you in the Master please lead a life that is appropriate to the calling you have been given; be careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, and there is one hope given to you by your calling; be careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond

of peace.

**Prayer**

Dear Father, since through the obedience of your servant and Son Jesus, you lifted up a fallen world, please free us from sin and bring the joy that lasts forever. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

ednesday

*First Reading*

*2 Samuel 24.1-4, 10-18, 24-25*

YHWH's anger once again burst into flame against Israel, and he set David against Israel by prompting him to have Israel and Judah counted. And so, the king told Joab and all the army with him, "Survey all the tribes in Israel from Dan to Beersheba and register the people so that I can know how many there are."

"May your God YHWH increase the number of your people a hundred times over for your royal majesty to see for his own eyes," said Joab. "But why is it the pleasure of my master the king to order such a thing?" But the king overruled Joab and the army's generals, and so they left the king's presence to register Israel's population.

Later, however, David regretted having counted the people, and said to YHWH, "I have committed a serious sin in what I have done. But please, YHWH, forgive your slave's guilt, because I have been very stupid."

When David rose in the morning, YHWH had spoken to David's seer, the prophet Gad, and told him, "Go and tell David, 'This is what YHWH says: I give you three alternatives; you are to choose one for me to inflict on you.'"

Gad then went to David to tell him, and asked, "Do you want a three years' famine to come on your land, or to be fleeing from your enemy for three months as he comes after you, or to have a three day plague fall on your land? Consider this and decide what I should answer the one who sent me."

David answered Gad, "I have a very serious problem. But let us fall

under the hand of God, because he is most merciful, and not let me fall into the hands of human beings.” And so David chose the plague; and it was during the time of wheat harvest when the plague broke out among the people. YHWH sent a plague over Israel from morning until the designated time, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. But when the angel reached his hand out to Jerusalem to destroy it, YHWH regretted the calamity and said to the angel who was visiting destruction on the people, “That is enough. Hold back your hand.” YHWH’s angel was at the time standing at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

When David saw the angel who was attacking the people, he told YHWH, “I am the one who has sinned; it is I, the shepherd, who have done the wrong. But these are sheep; what have they done? Punish me and my relatives.” On that same day Gad went to David and told him, “Go build an altar to YHWH on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”

David then bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty silver shekels; he built an altar there to YHWH and offered holocausts and peace offerings. YHWH then granted relief to the country, and the plague was stopped in Israel.

Please remember, Master, your treaty and say to the destroying angel, “That is enough. Hold back your hand now, or you will devastate the land and destroy all the people.”

It was I who sinned, and I who did the wrong; but what have these sheep done? Master, I beg you to turn your anger away from your people, or you will devastate the land and destroy all the people.

*Second Reading      The Didache (Teaching of the Twelve Emissaries)*

Celebrate the Eucharist in the following way: Say over the cup, “We thank you, Father, for the holy vine of your servant David, which you made known to us through your servant Jesus. May eternal glory be yours.”

Over the broken bread say, “We thank you, Father, for the life and the knowledge which you have revealed to us through your servant Jesus. May eternal glory be yours. In the same way as this broken bread, scattered on the mountains, was collected and became one, may your

Church also be collected together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom, since glory and power are yours through Prince Jesus forever.”

Do not let anyone eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been bathed in the name of the Master, because the statement of the Master also applies here: “Do not give what is holy to dogs.”

When you finish the meal, express your gratitude in this way: “We thank you, holy Father, for your name which you enshrined in our hearts. We thank you for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you revealed to us through your servant Jesus. May eternal glory be yours. Omnipotent Ruler, you created everything for the sake of your name; you gave men food and drink to enjoy so that they would be grateful to you. Now you have favored us through your servant Jesus with spiritual food and drink as well as with eternal life. Above all, we are grateful to you because you are mighty.

“Please remember your Church, Master, and free her from all harm. Make her perfect in your love, and once she has become holy, gather her from the four winds into the kingdom which you have prepared for her; because power and glory are yours forever.

“May grace come and this world cease to exist. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, he should come; if anyone is not, he should change his way of thinking. Maranatha. Amen.”

On the Master’s day, when you have assembled, break bread and celebrate the Eucharist. But first, confess your sins, so that your offering will be a pure one. If anyone has a quarrel with his neighbor, that person should not join you until he has been reconciled. Your sacrifice must not be defiled. In this regard, the Master has said, “In every place and time, offer me a pure sacrifice. I am a great king, says the Master, and my name is great among the nations.”

Is not the blessing cup which we bless a sharing in the Prince’s blood?  
And is not the bread we break a sharing in the Prince’s body?

Because there is only one bread, we, even though there are many of us, are one body, because we all share the same bread. And is not the bread we break a sharing in the Prince’s body?

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since through the obedience of your servant and Son Jesus,

you lifted up a fallen world, please free us from sin and bring the joy that lasts forever. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



## Thursday

*First Reading*

*1 Chronicles 22.5-19*

David said, “My son Solomon is young and immature; but the house that is to be built for YHWH must be made so magnificent that it will be famous and glorious in every country; and so I will make the preparations for it.”

For this reason, David amassed a great deal of material before his death; and then he called for his son Solomon and commanded him to build a house for YHWH, the God of Israel. David told Solomon, “My son, it was my intention to build a house myself to honor my God YHWH; but YHWH sent this word to me: ‘You have shed too much blood, and have waged great wars. You may not build a house in my honor because you have spilled too much blood on the ground in my sight. A son, however, is to be born to you, who will be a peaceful man, and I will give him rest from his enemies all around him. Solomon is to be his name, and in his time, I will bestow peace and tranquillity on Israel. It is he who will build a house in my honor; he will be a son to me, and I will be a father to him, and I will maintain the throne of his reign over Israel forever.’

“Now, my son, may YHWH be with you, and may you succeed in building the house of your God YHWH, as he has said that you will. May YHWH give you good judgment, so that you keep the Law of your God YHWH; it is only then that you will succeed, if you are careful to observe the rules and regulations which YHWH gave Moses for Israel. Be brave and firm; do not be afraid or be intimidated. Notice that I have spent a great deal of effort in storing up for God’s house a hundred thousand gold talents, a million silver talents, and such a great amount of bronze and iron that it cannot be weighed. I have also stored wood and stones, but you must add to the amount. You also have available an

unlimited supply of workmen, stonecutters, masons, carpenters, and every kind of craftsman skilled in working gold, silver, bronze, and iron. And so begin working, and God be with you.”

David also commanded all of Israel’s leaders to help his son Solomon. “Is not your God YHWH with you? Has he not given you rest all around you? Yes, he has subjected everyone who lives in the land to my power, and the land has been pacified before YHWH and his people. And so, devote your hearts and souls to a search for your God YHWH; and go on to build the holy dwelling of God YHWH, so that the Chest of YHWH’s Treaty can be brought into a house built in honor of YHWH.”

Offer your hearts and souls in a search for the Master. Come forward and build a holy dwelling for the Master, your God. Let us enter his residence; let us worship at his footstool.

The Master said, “My house is to be called a house of prayer for all the nations.” Let us enter his residence; let us worship at his footstool.

*Second Reading*

*An Exposition of Psalm 118 by St. Ambrose*

“My Father and I will come and make our home with him.” Your door should stand open to receive him; unlock your soul to him, and offer him a welcome in your mind, and then you will see the riches of simplicity, the treasures of peace, and the joy of grace. Throw wide open the gate of your heart, and stand before the sun of the everlasting light “that shines on every human being.” This true light shines on everyone; but if anyone closes his window, he will deprive himself of eternal light. If you shut the door of your mind, you shut out the Prince. Though he can enter, he does not want to force his way in brusquely, or compel us to admit him against our will.

He was born to a virgin, and came out of the womb as the light of the whole world to shine on everyone. His light is received by those who long for the radiance of perpetual light that night can never destroy. The sun of our daily experience is followed by the darkness of night, but the sun of holiness never sets, because wisdom cannot cede to evil.

It is a great privilege, then, for a man to have a door at which the Prince knocks. Our door is faith; if it is strong enough, the whole house is safe. This is the door by which the Prince enters; and so the Church

says in the Song of Songs, “My brother’s voice is heard at the door.” Listen to his knock, then, and listen to him asking to enter. “Open the door for me, my sister, my fiancée, my dove, my perfection, because my head is covered with dew, and my hair is full of night’s moisture.”

When does God the Word knock most often at your door? When his head is covered with the dew of night. He visits in love those in trouble and temptation, to save them from being overwhelmed by their hardships. His head is covered with dew or moisture when those who are in pain; that is the time when you must stay alert so that when the bridegroom comes he will not find himself shut out and leave. If you were to fall asleep, if your heart were not wide awake, he would go away without knocking; but if your heart is alert, he knocks and asks you to open the door for him.

Our soul has a door; it has gates. “Raise your heads, gates, and lift yourselves up, eternal doors, and the King of glory will enter.” If you open the gates of your faith, the King of glory will enter your house in a triumphal procession in honor of his suffering. Holiness has its gates also; we read in Scripture what Master Jesus said through his prophet: “Open the gates of holiness for me.”

It is the soul that has its door and its gates. The Prince comes to this door and knocks, and he knocks at these gates. Open them for him; he wants to come in and find his bride awake and waiting.

Here I stand at the door knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and dine with him, and he will dine with me.

It would be a good thing for that servant to be found at work when his master returns. I will come into his house and dine with him, and he will dine with me.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since through the obedience of your servant and Son Jesus, you lifted up a fallen world, please free us from sin and bring the joy that lasts forever. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.



*First Reading**1 Kings 1.11-35, 2.10-12*

Nathan said to Solomon's mother Bathsheba, "Have you heard that Haggith's son Adonijah has become king without our master David's knowing of it? Come let me advise you on what to do to save your life and your son Solomon's. Go immediately to see king David and say, 'Did you not, my master and king, swear to your servant that my son Solomon would be king after you and sit on your throne? Then why has Adonijah become king?' And while you are still there speaking to the king, I will come after you and confirm what you said."

So Bathsheba went to see the king in his chamber, where Abishag the Shunamite was attending him in his extreme old age; she bowed in homage to the king, who asked her, "What is it you wish?"

"My master," she answered, "you swore to your servant by your God YHWH that my son Solomon would reign after you and sit on your throne. But now Adonijah has become king, without your knowing of it, my master and king. He has slaughtered oxen, cattle that have been being fattened, and a great many sheep, and has invited all the king's sons, the priest Abiathar, and Joab, the general of the army—but not your servant Solomon. And now, my master and king, all of Israel is waiting for you to make known to them who is to sit on the throne after your royal majesty; if this is not done, then when my king and master sleeps with his ancestors, my son Solomon and I will be considered criminals."

While she was still speaking to the king, the prophet Nathan came in, and when he had been announced, the prophet entered the king's presence and, bowed to the ground in homage. Then Nathan said, "Have you decided, my master and king, that Adonijah is to reign after you and sit on your throne? He went out today and slaughtered a great number of oxen, cattle that were been fattened, and sheep, and invited all the king's sons, the commanders of the army, and the priest Abiathar to dine in his company, and they are saying, 'Long live King Adonijah!'"

"But he did not invite your servant here, nor the priest Zadok, nor Behaiah, son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon. Was this done by

my royal master's order without my being told who was to succeed to your majesty's kingly throne?"

King David answered, "Call Bathsheba back here." When she reentered the king's presence and stood before him, the king swore, "As surely as YHWH is alive, this very day I will fulfill the oath I swore to you by the God of Israel YHWH that your son Solomon would reign after me and sit upon my throne in my place." As she bowed to the floor in homage to the king, Bathsheba said, "May my master King David live forever!"

Then King David summoned the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, and Behaiah, son of Jehoiada. When they had entered the king's presence, he told them, "Take the royal attendants with you, and mount my son Solomon on my own mule and escort him down to Gihon; and there the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan are to anoint him king of Israel, and you are to blow a horn and call out, 'Long live King Solomon!' When you come back in his train, he is to go in and sit upon my throne and reign in my place. I designate him ruler of Israel and Judah."

David then rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. The length of David's reign over Israel was forty years: he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. Solomon was seated on the throne of his father David, with his sovereignty firmly established.

Daughters of Jerusalem, come out to see King Solomon wearing the crown with which his mother crowned him on his day of joy, his wedding day.

Please endow the king with virtue, my God; may he govern the poor with justice on his day of joy, his wedding day.

*Second Reading                    A Letter to the Corinthians by Pope St. Clement*

My friends, see what a marvelous thing love is; its perfection is beyond what we can say of it. Who except those to whom God grants it can really love? We ought to beg and plead with him in his mercy to make our love genuine, and unmarred by any too-human inclination.

From Adam down to the present, every generation has gone away; but those who became complete in love by God's grace have received a

place among the saints who will appear when the Prince's kingdom comes to us. As it is written, "Enter your rooms for a short while, until my fury and rage cease; and I will remember good times and raise you from your graves."

It will be a blessing for us, my friends, if we fulfill the Master's commands in harmonious, loving union, so that our sins will be forgiven through love—because it is written, "It is a blessing to have one's disobedience forgiven, and to have one's sins covered. It is a blessing for a man not to have the Master accuse him of wrong, and for him not to have any deceit in his mouth." This is the blessing that has been given to those who have been chosen by God through our Master, Prince Jesus, to whom may glory come forever. Amen.

And so we ought to pray to be granted forgiveness for our sins and for whatever we may have done when we were led astray by our opponent's slaves. And as for those who were leaders of the schism and the rebellion, they should also look to the hope we all have. That is, those who live in pious fear and love are willing to endure torture rather than have their neighbors suffer; and they would rather endure their own condemnation than the loss of the harmony that has been so nobly and virtuously handed down to us, because it is better for a man to admit his sins than to harden his heart.

Is there anyone, then, among you who is generous, kind, and filled with love? He should speak publicly in this way: "If I have been the cause of a rebellion, conflict, and schisms, then I will leave; I will go away to wherever you wish, and will do what the community wants, if it means that the Prince's flock will live in peace with the priests who are set over them." Anyone who acts in this way would win great glory for himself in the Prince, and he would be accepted everywhere, "because the earth belongs to the Master, and everything in it." This was the way people acted in the past and will continue to act in the future if they live without regret as citizens of God's city.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since through the obedience of your servant and Son Jesus, you lifted up a fallen world, please free us from sin and bring the joy that lasts forever. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one

God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.

## SATURDAY

*First Reading*

*Sirach 47.12-25*

Because he earned it, David had as his successor  
a wise son, who lived in security.  
Solomon reigned over an era of peace,  
because God made all his borders calm.  
He built a house in honor of God's name,  
and set up a holy shrine that would last.  
How wise you were when you were young  
and overflowing with teaching, like the Nile in flood!  
Your understanding covered the whole earth,  
and, like a sea, filled it with knowledge.  
Your fame reached distant shores,  
and their people came to listen to you;  
you astounded the nations with songs, stories, and riddles,  
and with your answers.  
You were called by that glorious name  
which was granted to Israel.  
You collected gold like so much iron,  
and heaped up silver as if it were lead.  
But you let yourself succumb to women  
and gave them power over your body;  
you brought dishonor on your name,  
and shame upon your marriage,  
retribution on your descendants  
and suffering all over your domain;  
and in this way, two governments sprang up  
when the throne was usurped in Ephraim.  
But God does not withdraw his mercy  
or allow even one of his promises to fail.  
He does not uproot the descendants of his chosen  
or destroy a friend's offspring;

so he left a remnant for Jacob,  
 and gave David a root from his own family.  
 Solomon finally slept with his fathers  
 and left behind one of his sons,  
 who was prodigal with foolishness, limited in good sense:  
 Rehoboam, who made the people rebel against his policies—  
 until the one who will be remembered came forward:  
 the sinner who led Israel into sin,  
 who brought ruin to Ephraim  
 and brought about their exile from their land.  
 Their sinfulness just grew and grew,  
 and they abandoned themselves to evil.

I will assemble the Israelites, and they will be two nations no longer; they will defile themselves no longer with their idols. They will be my people, and they will have one shepherd.

I have other sheep also that do not belong to this flock; I must lead them as well, and there will be one flock. They will be my people, and they will have one shepherd.

*Second Reading*                      *A Discourse on the Psalms by St. Augustine*

The temple that Solomon built to the Master was a forerunner and symbol of the future Church as well as of the Master's body. And this is why the Prince says in the Good News, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it!" That is, in the same way as Solomon built the ancient Temple, the true Solomon, the real peacemaker, our Master Prince Jesus, built a temple for himself. "Solomon," you see, means "peacemaker"; but Jesus is the real peacemaker, the one St. Paul is referring to when he says, "He is our peace, and unites the two of us into one thing."

The real peacemaker brought together in himself two walls coming from different angles, and became the cornerstone himself. One wall was formed of the circumcised believers, and the other of the uncircumcised Gentiles who had faith; and he made one Church of these two peoples, with himself as the cornerstone; and so he is the true peacemaker.

Therefore, when the king of Israel, Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, built his Temple, he acted as a symbol of the Prince, the true

Solomon and peacemaker. Still, I do not think it was the ancient Solomon, the forerunner of the Prince, who really built God's dwelling. As the beginning of the psalm tells us, "If the Master does not build the house, the builders are wasting their effort on it." And so it is the Master who builds the house; it is Master Jesus who builds his own dwelling. Many people may work at its building, but unless he builds it "the builders are wasting their effort on it."

And who are those who are working on it? All those who preach God's message in the Church, and who are servants of his sacraments. All of us are now rushing and working and building; but before us others have rushed, worked, and built; but still, "if the Master does not build the house, the builders are wasting their effort on it." The Emissaries, specifically Paul, saw some of them fail, and said, "You are holding observances of days, years, months, and seasons; I am afraid that I have wasted my effort on you." That is, since he realized that he was the result of the Master's building from the inside, he was disappointed because he had worked on them without any result. And so we are the ones who are speaking from the outside, but he is building from the inside; we notice the fact that you are listening, but he is the only one who knows what you are thinking, because he sees our thoughts. He is the one who builds, warns, instills fear, opens the mind, and bends the perceptions to the act of belief; and yet we, too, his servants, work and are his laborers, so to speak.

When the building of the Temple was finished, the Master's glory filled its hall, and the king in joy said, "Blessed be the Master, the God of Israel, for all he has promised to my father David."

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rebuild it. Blessed be the Master, the God of Israel, for all he has promised to my father David.

#### Prayer

Dear Father, since through the obedience of your servant and Son Jesus, you lifted up a fallen world, please free us from sin and bring the joy that lasts forever. We make this request through our Master, Prince Jesus, your Son, who is alive and reigning with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, through all the ages of ages. Amen.