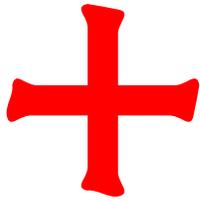


L ECTIONARY READINGS FOR YEAR "B"
THE REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY
USING TRANSLATIONS FROM THE
NEW JERUSALEM BIBLE,
THE NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION,
AND A FEW ADDITIONAL SOURCES
TO MAKE THE READINGS CLEARER

USED IN THE YEAR OF GRACE 2015

ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA EPISCOPAL CHURCH
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



DECEMBER 7, 2014 – THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

O RADIX JESSE

THE PROPHET ISAIAH 40:1–11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. “Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and cry to her that her period of service is ended, that her guilt has been atoned for; from the hand of the LORD, she has received double punishment for all her sins.” A voice cries, “Prepare in the desert a way for the LORD. Make a straight highway for our God across the wastelands. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be leveled, every cliff become a plateau, every escarpment a plain; then the glory of the LORD will be revealed and all humanity will see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

A voice said, “Cry aloud!” and I said, “What shall I cry?” “All humanity is grass and all its beauty like the wild flower’s. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on them. (The grass is surely the people.) The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God remains for ever.” Go up on a high mountain, messenger of Zion. Shout as loud as you can, messenger of Jerusalem!

Shout fearlessly, say to the towns of Judah, “Here is your God.” Here is the LORD God coming with power, his arm maintains his authority, his reward is with him and his prize precedes him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes. ❖

DECEMBER 7, 2014 – THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
O RADIX JESSE
THE SECOND LETTER OF PETER 3:8–15A

There is one thing, my dear friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not being slow in carrying out his promises, as some people think he is; rather is he being patient with you, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to repentance. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and melt away, the earth and all that it contains will be burned up.

Since everything is coming to an end like this, what holy and saintly lives you should be living while you wait for the Day of God to come, and try to hasten its coming: on that Day the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for, relying on his promises, is the new heavens and new earth, where uprightness will be at home. So then, my dear friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live blameless and unsullied lives so that he will find you at peace. Think of our Lord's patience as your opportunity to be saved. ❖

DECEMBER 7, 2014 — THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

O RADIX JESSE

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 1:1—8

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the prophet Isaiah: Look, I am going to send my messenger in front of you to prepare your way before you. A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.

John the Baptist was in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptized by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, “After me is coming someone who is more powerful than me, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” ❖

DECEMBER 14, 2014 – THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

O CLAVIS DAVID

THE PROPHET ISAIAH 61:1–4, 8–11

The spirit of the LORD is on me, for the LORD has anointed me. God has sent me to bring the news to the afflicted, to soothe the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, release to those in prison, to proclaim a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vengeance for our God, to comfort all who mourn (to give to Zion's mourners), to give them for ashes a garland, for mourning-dress the oil of gladness, for despondency festal attire; and they will be called 'terebinths of saving justice,' planted by the LORD to glorify God.

They will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise what has long lain waste, they will restore the ruined cities, all that has lain waste for ages past. For I am the LORD: I love fair judgment, I hate robbery and wrongdoing, and I shall reward them faithfully and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their race will be famous throughout the nations and their offspring throughout the peoples. All who see them will admit that they are a race whom the LORD has blessed.

I exult for joy in the LORD, my soul rejoices in my God, who has clothed me in garments of salvation, who has wrapped me in a cloak of saving justice, like a bridegroom wearing his garland, like a bride adorned in her jewels. For as the earth sends up its shoots and a garden makes seeds sprout, so the LORD God makes saving justice and praise spring up in the sight of all nations. ❖

DECEMBER 14, 2014 – THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

O CLAVIS DAVID

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS 5:16–24

Always be joyful; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks; this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not stifle the Spirit or despise the gift of prophecy with contempt; test everything and hold on to what is good and shun every form of evil. May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may your spirit, life, and body be kept blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who has called you is trustworthy and will carry it out. ❖

DECEMBER 14, 2014 — THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

O CLAVIS DAVID

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 1:6–8, 19–28**

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, he was to bear witness to the light. This was the witness of John, when the Judeans sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He declared, he did not deny but declared, “I am not the Christ.” So they asked, “Then are you Elijah?” He replied, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” So they said to him, “Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?” So he said, “I am, as Isaiah prophesied: A voice of one that cries in the desert—Prepare a way for the Lord. Make his paths straight!”

Now those who had been sent were Pharisees, and they put this question to him, “Why are you baptizing if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the Prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water; but

standing among you—unknown to you—is the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandal.” This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. ❖

DECEMBER 21, 2014 — THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
O ORIENS

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL 7:1–11, 16

Once King David had settled into his palace and the LORD had granted him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, “Look, I am living in a cedar-wood palace, while the ark of God is under awnings.” Nathan said to the king, “Go and do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you.”

But that very night, the word of the LORD came to Nathan: “Go and tell my servant David, ‘The LORD says this: Are you to build me a temple for me to live in? I have never lived in a house from the day when I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until today, but have kept traveling with a tent for shelter. In all my travels with all the Israelites, did I say to any of the judges of Israel, whom I had commanded to shepherd my people Israel: Why do you not build me a cedar-wood temple?’

“This is what you must say to my servant David, ‘The LORD Sabaoth says this: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people

Israel; I have been with you wherever you went; I have got rid of all your enemies for you. I am going to make your fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I am going to provide a place for my people Israel; I shall plant them there, and there they will live and never be disturbed again; nor will they be oppressed by the wicked any more, as they were in former times ever since the time when I instituted judges to govern my people Israel; and I shall grant you rest from all your enemies. The LORD furthermore tells you that he will make you a dynasty. Your dynasty and your sovereignty will ever stand firm before me and your throne be for ever secure.” ❖

DECEMBER 21, 2014 — THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

O ORIENS

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 16:25–27

Now to the One who can make you strong in accordance with the gospel that I preach and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, in accordance with that mystery which for endless ages was kept secret but now (as the prophets wrote) is revealed, as the eternal God commanded, to be made known to all the nations, so that they obey in faith: to that One, the only wise God, give glory through Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

Amen. ❖

DECEMBER 21, 2014 — THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

O ORIENS

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO LUKE 1:26–38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favor! The Lord is with you." She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favor. Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end."

Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God."

And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.” Mary said, “You see before you the Lord’s servant, let it happen to me as you have said.” And the angel left her. ❖

DECEMBER 25, 2014

CHRISTMAS

THE PROPHET ISAIAH 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness--

on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation,

you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you

as with joy at the harvest,

as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden,

and the bar across their shoulders,

the rod of their oppressor,

you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For all the boots of the tramping warriors

and all the garments rolled in blood

shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us,

a son given to us;

authority rests upon his shoulders;

and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually,

and there shall be endless peace

for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it

with justice and with righteousness

from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. ❖

DECEMBER 25, 2014

CHRISTMAS

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. ❖

DECEMBER 25, 2014

CHRISTMAS

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO LUKE 2:1-20**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see-- I am

bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. ❖

DECEMBER 28, 2014

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

A READING FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH 61:10-62:3

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.

The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the
LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ❖

DECEMBER 28, 2014

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

3:23-25; 4:4-7

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. ❖

DECEMBER 28, 2014

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 1:1-18**

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him. What has come into being in him was life, life that was the light of all humanity; and light shines in darkness, and darkness could not overpower it. A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, he was to bear witness to the light. The Word was the real light that gives light to everyone; he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had come into being through him, and the world did not recognize him. He came to his own and his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself. The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the

glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. John witnesses to him. He proclaims: 'This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me has passed ahead of me because he existed before me.' Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received -- one gift replacing another, for the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. ❖

DECEMBER 31, 2014

NEW YEAR'S EVE

A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS 3: 5-14

At Gibeon, the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream during the night. God said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you.' Solomon replied, 'You showed most faithful love to your servant David, my father, when he lived his life before you in faithfulness and uprightness and integrity of heart; you have continued this most faithful love to him by allowing a son of his to sit on his throne today. Now, the LORD my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. And here is your servant, surrounded with your people whom you have chosen, a people so numerous that its number cannot be counted or reckoned. So give your servant a heart to understand how to govern your people, how to discern between good and evil, for how could one otherwise govern such a great people as yours?' It pleased the LORD that Solomon should have asked for this. 'Since you have asked for this,' God said, 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies but have asked for a discerning judgment for yourself, here and now I do

what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as no one has had before and no one will have after you. What you have not asked I shall give you too: such riches and glory as no other king can match. And I shall give you a long life, if you follow my ways, keeping my laws and commandments, as your father David followed them.' ❖

DECEMBER 31, 2014

NEW YEAR'S EVE

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF JAMES 14:13-17, 5:7-11

Well now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow, we are off to this or that town; we are going to spend a year there, trading, and make some money.' You never know what will happen tomorrow: you are no more than a mist that appears for a little while and then disappears. Instead of this, you should say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we shall still be alive to do this or that.' But as it is, how boastful and loud-mouthed you are! Boasting of this kind is always wrong. Everyone who knows what is the right thing to do and does not do it commits a sin.

Now be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn rains and the spring rains! You too must be patient; do not lose heart, because the Lord's coming will be soon. Do not make complaints against one another, brothers, so as not to be brought to judgment yourselves; the Judge is already to be seen waiting at the gates. For your example, brothers, in patiently putting up with

persecution, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name; remember it is those who had perseverance that we say are the blessed ones. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and understood the Lord's purpose, realizing that the Lord is kind and compassionate. ❖

DECEMBER 31, 2014

NEW YEAR'S EVE

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 5:1-15

There was a festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem next to the Sheep Pool there is a pool called Bethesda in Hebrew, which has five porticos; and under these were crowds of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed. One man there had an illness which had lasted thirty-eight years, and when Jesus saw him lying there and knew he had been in that condition for a long time, he said, 'Do you want to be well again?' 'Sir,' replied the sick man, 'I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed; and while I am still on the way, someone else gets down there before me.' Jesus said, 'Get up, pick up your sleeping-mat and walk around.' The man was cured at once, and he picked up his mat and started to walk around.

Now that day happened to be the Sabbath, so they said to the man who had been cured, 'It is the Sabbath; you are not allowed to carry your sleeping-mat.' He replied, 'But the man who cured me told me, "Pick up your sleeping-mat and walk around."' They asked, 'Who is the man who said to you, "Pick up your

sleeping-mat and walk around”?’ The man had no idea who it was, since Jesus had disappeared, as the place was crowded. After a while Jesus met him in the Temple and said, ‘Now you are well again, do not sin any more, or something worse may happen to you.’ The man went back and told the authorities that it was Jesus who had cured him. ❖

JANUARY 4, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

JEREMIAH 31:7-14

Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.”

See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame, those with child and
those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him,

and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.”

For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,

and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,

and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,

over the grain, the wine, and the oil,

and over the young of the flock and the herd;

their life shall become like a watered garden,

and they shall never languish again.

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,

and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy,

I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

I will give the priests their fill of fatness,

and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,

says the LORD. ❖

JANUARY 4, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

EPHESIANS 1:3-6,15-19A

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe. ❖

JANUARY 4, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MATTHEW 2:1-12**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Judeans? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’“

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay

him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. ❖

JANUARY 11, 2015
THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD
GENESIS 1:1–5

In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Now the earth was a formless void, and there was darkness over the deep, with a divine wind sweeping over the waters.

God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that light was good, and God divided light from darkness. God called light ‘day’, and darkness he called ‘night’. Evening came and morning came: the first day.



JANUARY 11, 2015
THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 19:1–7

It happened that while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul made his way overland as far as Ephesus, where he found a number of disciples. When he asked, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” they answered, “No, we were never even told there was such a thing as a Holy Spirit.” He asked, “Then how were you baptized?” They replied, “With John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance; but he insisted that the people should believe in the one who was to come after him — namely Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the moment Paul had laid hands on them the Holy Spirit came down on them, and they began to speak with tongues and to prophesy. There were about twelve of these men in all.



JANUARY 11, 2015

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 1:4-11**

John the Baptist was in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptized by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, “After me is coming someone who is more powerful than me, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. And at once, as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; my favor rests on you.”



JANUARY 18, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

FIRST SAMUEL 3:1–10

Now, the boy Samuel was serving the LORD in the presence of Eli; in those days it was rare for the LORD to speak; visions were uncommon. One day, it happened that Eli was lying down in his room. His eyes were beginning to grow dim; he could no longer see. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying in the LORD's sanctuary, where the ark of God was, when the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" He answered, "Here I am," and, running to Eli, he said, "Here I am, as you called me." Eli said, "I did not call. Go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

And again the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" He got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, as you called me." He replied, "I did not call, my son; go back and lie down." As yet, Samuel had no knowledge of the LORD and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

Again the LORD called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, as you called me." Eli then understood that the LORD was calling the child,

and he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, ‘Speak, the LORD; for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The LORD then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, “Samuel! Samuel!” Samuel answered, “Speak, the LORD; for your servant is listening.” ❖

JANUARY 18, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 6:12–20

“For me everything is permissible”; maybe, but not everything does good. True, for me everything is permissible, but I am determined not to be dominated by anything. Foods are for the stomach, and the stomach is for foods; and God will destroy them both. But the body is not for sexual immorality; it is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. God raised up the Lord and God will raise us up too by power.

Do you not realize that your bodies are members of Christ’s body; do you think one can take parts of Christ’s body and join them to the body of a prostitute? Out of the question! Or do you not realize that anyone who attaches himself to a prostitute is one body with her, since the two, as it is said, become one flesh? But anyone who attaches himself to the Lord is one spirit with him.

Keep away from sexual immorality. All other sins that people may commit are done outside the body; but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you and whom you received from God? You are not your own property, then; you have been bought at a price. So use your body for the glory of God. ❖

JANUARY 18, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO
JOHN 1:43–51**

The day after Jesus had decided to leave for Galilee, he met Philip and said, “Follow me.” Philip came from the same town, Bethsaida, as Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth.” Nathanael said to him, “From Nazareth? Can anything good come from that place?” Philip replied, “Come and see.”

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming he said of him, “There, truly, is an Israelite in whom there is no deception.” Nathanael asked, “How do you know me?” Jesus replied, “Before Philip came to call you, I saw you under the fig tree.” Nathanael answered, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel.” Jesus replied, “You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig tree. You are going to see greater things than that.” And then he added, “In all truth I tell you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man.” ❖

JANUARY 25, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JONAH 3:1–5, 10

The word of the LORD was addressed to Jonah a second time. “Up!” God said, “Go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach to it as I shall tell you.” Jonah finally set out and went to Nineveh in obedience to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was a city great beyond compare; to cross it took three days. Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city and then proclaimed, “Only forty days more and Nineveh will be overthrown.” And the people of Nineveh believed in God; proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least. God saw their efforts to renounce their evil ways. And God relented about the disaster which had been threatened on them, and God did not bring it. ❖

JANUARY 25, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 7:29–31

Brothers and sisters, the time has become limited, and from now on those who have spouses should live as though they had none; those who mourn as though they were not mourning; those who enjoy life as though they did not enjoy it; those who have been buying property as though they had no possessions; and those who are involved with the world as though they were people not engrossed in it. Because this world as we know it is passing away. ❖

JANUARY 25, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 1:14–20**

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the gospel from God saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel.” As he was walking along by the Lake of Galilee he saw Simon and Simon’s brother Andrew casting a net in the lake — for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Come after me and I will make you into fishers of people.” And at once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending the nets. At once he called them and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him. ❖

FEBRUARY 1, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY 18:15–20

The LORD your God will raise up a prophet like me; you will listen. This is exactly what you asked The LORD your God to do—at Horeb, on the day of the Assembly, when you said, “Never let me hear the voice of The LORD my God or see this great fire again, or I shall die.” Then The LORD said to me, “What they have said is well said. From their own brothers I shall raise up a prophet like yourself; I shall put my words into his mouth and he will tell them everything I command him. Anyone who refuses to listen to my words, spoken by him in my name, will have to render an account to me. But the prophet who presumes to say something in my name which I have not commanded him to say, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die.” ❖

FEBRUARY 1, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 8:1–13

Now about food which has been dedicated to false gods. We are well aware that all of us have knowledge; but while knowledge puffs up, love is what builds up. Someone may think that they have full knowledge of something and yet not know it as well as they should; but someone who loves God is known by God. On the subject of eating foods dedicated to false gods, we are well aware that none of the false gods exists in reality and that there is no God other than the One. Though there are so-called gods, in the heavens or on earth—and there are plenty of gods and plenty of lords— yet for there is only one God, the Father from whom all things come and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things come and through whom we exist.

However, not everybody has this knowledge. There are some in whose consciences false gods still play such a part that they take the food as though it had been dedicated to a god; then their conscience, being vulnerable, is defiled, But of course food cannot make

us acceptable to God; we lose nothing by not eating it, we gain nothing by eating it. Only be careful that this freedom of yours does not in any way turn into an obstacle to trip those who are vulnerable. Suppose someone sees you, who have the knowledge, sitting eating in the temple of some false god, do you not think that his conscience, vulnerable as it is, may be encouraged to eat foods dedicated to false gods? And then it would be through your knowledge that this brother for whom Christ died, vulnerable as he is, has been lost. So, sinning against your brothers and wounding their vulnerable consciences, you would be sinning against Christ. That is why, if food can be the cause of a brother's downfall, I will never eat meat any more, rather than cause my brother's downfall. ❖

FEBRUARY 1, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 1:21-28**

Jesus and his disciples went as far as Capernaum, and at once on the Sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.

And at once in their synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit, and he shouted, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.’ But Jesus rebuked it saying, ‘Be quiet! Come out of him!’ And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. The people were so astonished that they started asking one another what it all meant, saying, ‘Here is a teaching that is new, and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.’ And his reputation at once spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside. ❖

FEBRUARY 8, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE PROPHET ISAIAH 40:21–31

Did you not know, had you not heard? Was it not told you from the beginning? Have you not understood how the earth was set on its foundations? The One who sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, the inhabitants of which are like grasshoppers, stretches out the heavens like a cloth, spreads them out like a tent to live in. The Holy One reduces princes to nothing, the rulers of the world to mere emptiness. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the soil, than that One blows on them and they wither and the storm carries them away like chaff.

“To whom can you compare me, or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look: the One who created these things leads out their army in order, summoning each of them by name. So mighty is that power, so great that strength, that not one fails to answer.

How can you say, Jacob, how can you repeat, Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, my rights are ignored by my God”?

Did you not know? Had you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, who created the remotest parts of the earth. The LORD does not grow tired or weary, that One's understanding is beyond fathoming. The LORD gives strength to the weary, and strengthens the powerless. Youths grow tired and weary, the young stumble and fall, but those who hope in the LORD will regain their strength, they will sprout wings like eagles; though they run they will not grow weary, though they walk they will never tire. ❖

FEBRUARY 8, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 9:16–23

Preaching the gospel gives me nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion and I should be in trouble if I failed to do it. If I did it on my own initiative I would deserve a reward; but if I do it under compulsion I am simply accepting a task entrusted to me. What reward do I have, then? That in my preaching I offer the gospel free of charge to avoid using the rights which the gospel allows me.

So though I was not a slave to any human being, I put myself in slavery to all people, to win as many as I could. To the Hebrews I made myself as a Hebrew, to win those in the Covenant of Israel; to those under the Law as one under the Law (though I am not), in order to win those under the Law; to those outside the Law as one outside the Law, though I am not outside the Law but under Christ's law, to win those outside the Law. To the weak, I made myself weak, to win the weak. I accommodated myself to people in all kinds of different situations, so that by all possible means I might bring some to salvation. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, that I may share its benefits with others. ❖

FEBRUARY 8, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MARK

1:29–39

At once on leaving the synagogue, Jesus went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed and feverish, and at once they told him about her. He went in to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to serve them.

That evening, after sunset, they brought to Jesus all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were sick with diseases of one kind or another; he also drove out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was.

In the morning, long before dawn, Jesus got up and left the house and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, "Everybody is looking for you."

He answered, "Let us go elsewhere, to the neighboring country towns, so that I can proclaim the message there too, because that is why I came." And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out devils. ❖

FEBRUARY 15, 2015

THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS 2:1–12

This is what happened when the LORD took Elijah up to heaven in the whirlwind: Elijah and Elisha set out from Gilgal, and Elijah said to Elisha, ‘You stay here, for the LORD is only sending me to Bethel.’ But Elisha replied, ‘As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you!’ and they went down to Bethel. The brotherhood of prophets living at Bethel came out to meet Elisha and said, ‘Do you know that the LORD will carry your lord and master away today?’ ‘Yes, I know,’ he said, ‘be quiet.’ Elijah said, ‘Elisha, you stay here, the LORD is only sending me to Jericho.’ But he replied, ‘As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you!’ and they went on to Jericho. The brotherhood of prophets living at Jericho went up to Elisha and said, ‘Do you know that the LORD will carry your lord and master away today?’ ‘Yes, I know,’ he said, ‘be quiet.’ Elijah said, ‘Elisha, you stay here, the LORD is only sending me to the Jordan.’ But he replied, ‘As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you!’ And they went on together.

Fifty of the brotherhood of prophets followed them, halting some distance away as the two of them stood beside the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water; and the water divided to left and right, and the two of them crossed over dry-shod. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Make your request. What can I do for you before I am snatched away from you?' Elisha answered, 'Let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' 'Your request is difficult,' Elijah said. 'If you see me while I am being snatched away from you, it will be as you ask; if not, it will not be so.' Now as they walked on, talking as they went, a chariot of fire appeared and horses of fire coming between the two of them; and Elijah went up to heaven in the whirlwind. Elisha saw it, and shouted, 'My father! My father! Chariot of Israel and its chargers!' Then he lost sight of him, and taking hold of his own clothes he tore them in half. ❖

FEBRUARY 15, 2015

THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 4:3–6

If our gospel seems to be veiled at all, it is so to those who are on the way to destruction, the unbelievers whose minds have been blinded by the god of this world, so that they cannot see shining the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. It is not ourselves that we are proclaiming, but Christ Jesus as the Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. It is God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' that has shone into our hearts to enlighten them with the knowledge of God's glory, the glory on the face of Christ. ❖

FEBRUARY 15, 2015

THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO

MARK 9:2–9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain on their own by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became brilliantly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus, ‘Rabbi,’ he said, ‘it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and from the cloud there came a voice, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.’ Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

As they were coming down from the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of man had risen from the dead. ❖

FEBRUARY 22, 2015
THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT
THE BOOK OF GENESIS 9:8-17

God spoke as follows to Noah and his sons, ‘I am now establishing my covenant with you and with your descendants to come, and with every living creature that was with you: birds, cattle and every wild animal with you; everything that came out of the ark, every living thing on earth. And I shall maintain my covenant with you: that never again shall all living things be destroyed by the waters of a flood, nor shall there ever again be a flood to devastate the earth.’

‘And this’, God said, ‘is the sign of the covenant which I now make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all ages to come: I now set my bow in the clouds and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I shall recall the covenant between myself and you and every living creature, in a word all living things, and never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all living things. When the bow is in the clouds I shall see it and call to mind the eternal covenant between

God and every living creature on earth, that is, all living things.'

'That', God told Noah, 'is the sign of the covenant I have established between myself and all living things on earth.' ❖

FEBRUARY 22, 2015
THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT
THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER 3:18-22

Christ himself died once and for all for sins, the upright for the sake of the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. They refused to believe long ago, while God patiently waited to receive them, in Noah's time when the ark was being built. In it only a few, that is eight souls, were saved through water. It is the baptism corresponding to this water which saves you now—not the washing off of physical dirt but the pledge of a good conscience given to God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, with angels, ruling forces and powers subject to him. ❖

FEBRUARY 22, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING

MARK 1:9-15

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. And at once, as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favor rests on you.’

And at once the Spirit drove him into the desert and he remained there for forty days, and was put to the test by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the gospel from God saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel.’ ❖

MARCH 1, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

THE BOOK OF GENESIS 17:1-7, 15-16

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.” Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.” God said to Abraham, “As for Sarah your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” ❖

MARCH 1, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS 4:13-25

The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") -- in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the

barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification. ❖

MARCH 1, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING

MARK 8:31-38

Then Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” ❖

MARCH 8, 2015

THE PATRONAL FEAST OF ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON 7:24–28

For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all
things.

For she is a breath of the power of God,
and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;
therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her.

For she is a reflection of eternal light,
a spotless mirror of the working of God,
and an image of his goodness.

Although she is but one, she can do all things,
and while remaining in herself, she renews all things;
in every generation she passes into holy souls
and makes them friends of God, and prophets;
for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives
with wisdom. ❖

MARCH 8, 2015

THE PATRONAL FEAST OF ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS 2:17–22

So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God. ❖

MARCH 8, 2015

THE PATRONAL FEAST OF ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA

A READING FROM GREGORY OF NYSSA

I have briefly traced out the life of the great Moses like a pattern of beauty, so that each one of us might copy the beauty shown here by imitating his way of life.

What surer testimony to Moses' perfection could we find, then God's own voice saying to him, "You are my most intimate friend"?

Now it is time for you, noble friend, to look to Moses' example, and by transferring its deeper meaning to your own life, to be known by God and to become God's friend. This is true perfection: not to shun wickedness, for fear of punishment, like slaves, nor to do good because we hope for rewards, as if cashing in on a deal. On the contrary, setting aside all the prizes we hope for—and which have been promised—we regard falling from God's friendship as the only thing dreadful, and we consider becoming God's friend the only thing truly worthwhile. This, I said, is the perfection of life.

As God lifts your understanding to what is magnificent and divine, whatever you find — and I know you will

find plenty — will surely serve the common good in
Christ Jesus. Amen.

Here Gregory of Nyssa ended his writings, and died in
the year of grace three hundred ninety-five. ❖

MARCH 8, 2015

THE PATRONAL FEAST OF ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
JOHN 15:7–17**

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for whatever you please and you will get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit and be my disciples. I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; so that the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. My command to you is to love one another. ❖

MARCH 15, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS 21:4–9

The Israelites left Mount Hor by the road to the Sea of Suph, to skirt round Edom. On the way the people lost patience. They spoke against God and against Moses, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the desert? For there is neither food nor water here; we are sick of this meager diet.”

At this, God sent fiery serpents among the people; their bite brought death to many in Israel. The people came and said to Moses, “We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you. Intercede for us with the LORD to save us from these serpents.” Moses interceded for the people, and the LORD replied, “Make a fiery serpent and raise it as a standard. Anyone who is bitten and looks at it will survive.” Moses then made a serpent out of bronze and raised it as a standard, and anyone who was bitten by a serpent and looked at the bronze serpent survived. ❖

MARCH 15, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS 2:1–10

You were dead, through the crimes and the sins which used to make up your way of life when you were living by the principles of this world, obeying the ruler who dominates the air, the spirit who is at work in those who rebel. We too were all among them once, living only by our natural inclinations, obeying the demands of human self-indulgence and our own whim; our nature made us no less liable to God's retribution than the rest of the world. But God, being rich in faithful love – through the great love with which God loved us, even when we were dead in our sins – brought us to life with Christ (it is through grace that you have been saved) and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.

This was to show for all ages to come, through God's goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how extraordinarily rich that One is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus for the good works which God has already designated to make up our way of life. ❖

MARCH 15, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
JOHN 3:14–21**

As Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For this is how God loved the world: God gave the only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world not to judge the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be judged; but whoever does not believe is judged already, because that person does not believe in the Name of God's only Son.

And the judgment is this: though the light has come into the world, people have preferred darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, all who do wrong hate the light and avoid it, to prevent their actions from being shown up; but all who do the truth come out into the light, so that what they are doing may plainly appear as done in God. ❖

MARCH 22, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH 31:31–34

Look, the days are coming, the LORD declares, when I shall make a new covenant with the House of Israel (and the House of Judah), but not like the covenant I made with their ancestors the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, a covenant which they broke, even though I was their Master, the LORD declares. No, this is the covenant I shall make with the House of Israel when those days have come, the LORD declares. Within them I shall plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I shall be their God and they will be my people. There will be no further need for everyone to teach neighbor or brother or sister, saying, “Learn to know the LORD!” No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest, the LORD declares, since I shall forgive their guilt and never more call their sin to mind. ❖

MARCH 22, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 5:5–10

It was not Christ who gave himself the glory of becoming high priest, but the one who said to him “You are my Son, today I have fathered you,” and in another text “You are a priest for ever, of the order of Melchizedek.” During his life on earth, Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, with loud cries and with tears, to the one who had the power to save him from death, and, winning a hearing by his reverence, he learnt obedience, Son though he was, through his sufferings; when he had been perfected, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation and was acclaimed by God with the title of high priest of the order of Melchizedek. ❖

MARCH 22, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 12:20-33**

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, “Sir, we should like to see Jesus.” Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus.

Jesus replied to them: “Now the hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. In all truth I tell you, unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest. All who love their life lose it; all who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me, must follow me, and my servant will be with me wherever I am. If anyone serves me, my Father will honor him.

“Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it is for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your

name!” A voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will again glorify it.”

The crowd standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, “It was an angel speaking to him.” Jesus answered, “It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours. Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself.” By these words Jesus indicated the kind of death he would die. ❖

APRIL 12, 2015
THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 4:32-35

The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, as everything they owned was held in common.

The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and they were all accorded great respect.

None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from the sale of them, to present it to the apostles; it was then distributed to any who might be in need. ❖

APRIL 12, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN 1:1–2:2

Something which has existed since the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have watched and touched with our own hands, the Word of life — this is our theme. That life was made visible; we saw it and are giving our testimony, declaring to you the eternal life, which was present to the Father and has been revealed to us. We are declaring to you what we have seen and heard, so that you too may share our life. Our life is shared with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing this to you so that our joy may be complete.

This is what we have heard from him and are declaring to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. If we say that we share in God's life while we are living in darkness, we are lying, because we are not living the truth. But if we live in light, as he is in light, we have a share in another's life, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

If we say, 'We have no sin,' we are deceiving ourselves, and truth has no place in us; if we acknowledge our sins, he is trustworthy and upright, so that he will forgive our sins and will cleanse us from all evil. If we say, 'We have never sinned,' we make him a liar, and his word has no place in us.

My children, I am writing this to prevent you from sinning; but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the upright. He is the sacrifice to expiate our sins, and not only ours, but also those of the whole world. ❖

APRIL 12, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 20:19–31**

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the authorities. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, ‘Peace be with you,’ and, after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord, and he said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. ‘As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.’

After saying this he breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained.

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord,’ but he answered, ‘Unless I can see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I

refuse to believe.’ Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. ‘Peace be with you,’ he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving any more but believe.’ Thomas replied, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him: You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

There were many other signs that Jesus worked in the sight of the disciples, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name. ❖

APRIL 19, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 3:12-19

When Peter saw the people he addressed them, ‘People of Israel, why are you so surprised at this? Why are you staring at us as though we had made this crippled man walk by our own power or holiness? It is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, who has glorified his servant Jesus whom you handed over and then disowned in the presence of Pilate after he had given his verdict to release him. It was you who accused the Holy and Upright One, you who demanded that a murderer should be released to you while you killed the prince of life. God, however, raised him from the dead, and to that fact we are witnesses; and it is the name of Jesus which, through faith in him, has brought back the strength of this man whom you see here and who is well known to you. It is faith in him that has restored this man to health, as you can all see. ‘Now I know, friends, that neither you nor your leaders had any idea what you were really doing; but this was the way God carried out what he had foretold, when he said through all his prophets that his Christ would suffer. Now you must repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out. ❖

APRIL 19, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN 3:1-7

You must see what great love the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children—which is what we are! The reason why the world does not acknowledge us is that it did not acknowledge him. My dear friends, we are already God's children, but what we shall be in the future has not yet been revealed. We are well aware that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is.

Whoever treasures this hope of him purifies himself, to be as pure as he is. Whoever sins, acts wickedly, because all sin is wickedness. Now you are well aware that he has appeared in order to take sins away, and that in him there is no sin. No one who remains in him sins, and whoever sins has neither seen him nor recognized him. Children, do not let anyone lead you astray.

Whoever acts uprightly is upright, just as he is upright.



APRIL 19, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO LUKE 24:36B-48**

The disciples were talking about the stories they had heard about Jesus after his death, when he himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, "Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts stirring in your hearts? See by my hands and my feet that it is I myself. Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have." And as he said this he showed them his hands and his feet. Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it, as they were dumbfounded; so he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes.

Then Jesus told them, "This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms, was destined to be fulfilled." He then opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he

said to them, “So it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this.” ❖

APRIL 26, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 4:5-12

It happened that the rulers, elders and scribes held a meeting in Jerusalem with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, Jonathan, Alexander and all the members of the high-priestly families. They made the prisoners stand in the middle and began to interrogate them, 'By what power, and by whose name have you men done this?' Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed them, 'Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple and asking us how he was healed, you must know, all of you, and the whole people of Israel, that it is by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, and God raised from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man stands before you cured. This is the stone which you, the builders, rejected but which has become the cornerstone. Only in him is there salvation; for of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.' ❖

APRIL 26, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN 3:16–24

This is the proof of love, that Christ laid down his life for us, and we too ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If those who are well off in worldly possessions and sees their brother or sister in need but closes their heart, how can the love of God be remaining in them? Children, our love must be not just words or mere talk, but something active and genuine. This will be the proof that we belong to the truth, and it will convince us in God's presence, even if our own feelings condemn us, that that One is greater than our feelings and knows all things. My dear friends, if our own feelings do not condemn us, we can be fearless before God, and whatever we ask we shall receive, because we keep the commandments and do what is acceptable to God. The commandment is this, that we should believe in the name of the Son Jesus Christ and that we should love one another as was commanded us. Those who keep the commandments remain in God, and God in them. And this is the proof that God remains in us: the Spirit that has been given us. ❖

APRIL 26, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 10:11–18

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and runs away, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; he runs away because he is only a hired hand and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and I must lead these too. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, one shepherd. The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as I have power to lay it down, so I have power to take it up again; and this is the command I have received from my Father. ❖

MAY 3, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 8:26-40

The angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, 'Set out at noon and go along the road that leads from Jerusalem down to Gaza, the desert road.' So he set off on his journey. Now an Ethiopian had been on pilgrimage to Jerusalem; he was a eunuch and an officer at the court of the Candice, or queen, of Ethiopia; he was her chief treasurer. He was now on his way home; and as he sat in his chariot he was reading the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join that chariot.'

When Philip ran up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How could I, unless I have someone to guide me?' So he urged Philip to get in and sit by his side. Now the passage of scripture he was reading was this: Like a lamb led to the slaughterhouse, like a sheep dumb in front of its shearers, he never opens his mouth. In his humiliation fair judgment was denied him. Who will ever talk about his descendants, since his life on earth has been cut short?

The eunuch addressed Philip and said, 'Tell me, is the prophet referring to himself or someone else?' Starting, therefore, with this text of scripture Philip proceeded to explain the good news of Jesus to him.

Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is some water; is there anything to prevent my being baptized?' He ordered the chariot to stop, then Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water and he baptized him. But after they had come up out of the water again Philip was taken away by the Spirit of the Lord, and the eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. Philip appeared in Azotus and continued his journey, proclaiming the good news in every town as far as Caesarea. ❖

MAY 3, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN 4:7–21

My dear friends let us love one another, since love is from God and everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever fails to love does not know God, because God is love. This is the revelation of God's love for us, that God sent the only Son into the world that we might have life through him. Love consists in this: it is not we who loved God, but God loved us and sent the Son to expiate our sins.

My dear friends, if God loved us so much, we too should love one another. No one has ever seen God, but as long as we love one another God remains in us and God's love comes to its perfection in us. This is the proof that we remain in God and God in us, that God has given us a share in the Spirit. We ourselves have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son as Savior of the world. Those who acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in them and they in God. We have recognized for ourselves, and put our faith in, the love God has for us.

God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God in them.

Love comes to its perfection in us when we can face the Day of Judgment fearlessly, because even in this world we have become as God is. In love there is no room for fear, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear implies punishment and no one who is afraid has come to perfection in love. Let us love, then, because God first loved us. All who say 'I love God' and hate their brother or sister, is a liar, since those who do not love the brother or sister whom they can see cannot love God whom they have not seen. Indeed this is the commandment we have received from God, that those who love God, must also love their brother and sister.



MAY 3, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 15:1–8**

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit that One cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit is pruned to make it bear even more. You are clean already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who remain in me, with me in them, bear fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a branch — and withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire and are burnt. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for whatever you please and you will get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit and be my disciples. ❖

MAY 10, 2015

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on gentiles too, since they could hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God. Peter himself then said, 'Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people, now they have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' He then gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterwards they begged him to stay on for some days. ❖

MAY 10, 2015

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN 5:1–6

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and whoever loves the father loves the son. In this way we know that we love God's children, when we love God and keep the commandments. This is what the love of God is: keeping the commandments. Nor are God's commandments burdensome, because every child of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

Who can overcome the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? He it is who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with water alone but with water and blood, and it is the Spirit that bears witness, for the Spirit is Truth. ❖

MAY 10, 2015

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 15:9–17**

I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in that love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; so that the Father will give you anything you ask in my name. My command to you is to love one another. ❖

MAY 17, 2015

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ASCENSION SUNDAY

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 1:1-11

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the

Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” ❖

MAY 17, 2015

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ASCENSION SUNDAY

THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN 5:9-13

If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. ❖

MAY 17, 2015

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ASCENSION SUNDAY

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 17:6-19**

“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the

one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. ❖

MAY 24, 2015

THE DAY OF PENTECOST - WHITSUNDAY

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 2:1-21

When Pentecost day came round, the disciples had all met together, when suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent wind which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and there appeared to them tongues as of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak different languages as the Spirit gave them power to express themselves.

Now there were devout people living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, and each one was bewildered to hear these speaking their own language. They were amazed and astonished. “Surely,” they said, “All these speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in their own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; residents of Rome—Covenant members and proselytes alike—

Cretans and Arabs, we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.” Everyone was amazed and perplexed; they asked one another what it all meant.

Some, however, laughed it off. “They have been drinking too much new wine,” they said. Then Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed them in a loud voice: “People of Judaea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, make no mistake about this, but listen carefully to what I say. These are not drunk, as you imagine; why, it is only the third hour of the day. On the contrary, this is what the prophet was saying: ‘In the last days, the Lord declares, I shall pour out my Spirit on all humanity. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young people shall see visions, your old people dream dreams. Even on the slaves, men and women, shall I pour out my Spirit. I will show portents in the sky above and signs on the earth below. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the day of the Lord comes, that great and terrible Day. And all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” ❖

MAY 24, 2015

THE DAY OF PENTECOST - WHITSUNDAY

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 8:22 - 27

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ❖

MAY 24, 2015

THE DAY OF PENTECOST - WHITSUNDAY

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 15:26-27; 16:4B-15**

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me

no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ❖

MAY 31, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

TRINITY SUNDAY

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH 6:1–8

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne; his train filled the sanctuary. Above him stood seraphs, each one with six wings: two to cover its face, two to cover its feet and two for flying; and they were shouting these words to each other: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts. The doorposts shook at the sound of their shouting, and the Temple was full of smoke. Then I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a person of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts." Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding in its hand a live coal which it had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. With this it touched my mouth and said: "Look, this has touched your lips, your guilt has been removed and your sin forgiven." I then heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I, send me." ❖

MAY 31, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

TRINITY SUNDAY

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 8:12–17

My brothers and sisters, we have no obligation to human nature to be dominated by it. If you do live in that way, you are doomed to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the habits originating in the body, you will have life.

All who are guided by the Spirit of God are children of God; for what you received was not the spirit of slavery to bring you back into fear; you received the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry out, “Abba, Father!” The Spirit herself joins with our spirit to bear witness that we are children of God. And if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, provided that we share his suffering, so as to share his glory. ❖

MAY 31, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

TRINITY SUNDAY

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 3: 1-17**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the people in Jerusalem. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with

everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ❖

JUNE 7, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 5

THE BOOK OF GENESIS 3:8-15

The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.” The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” ❖

JUNE 7, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 5

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 4:13 - 5:1

But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

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

JUNE 7, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 5

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING

MARK 3:20 – 35

The crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, “He has gone out of his mind.” And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.” And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

“Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have

forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” ❖

JUNE 14, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 6

EZEKIEL 17:22-24

Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar;

I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one

from the topmost of its young twigs;

I myself will plant it

on a high and lofty mountain.

On the mountain height of Israel

I will plant it,

in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,

and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live;

in the shade of its branches will nest

winged creatures of every kind.

All the trees of the field shall know

that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree,

I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree

and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken; I will accomplish it. ❖

JUNE 14, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 6

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 5:6-17

We are always full of confidence, then, realizing that as long as we are at home in the body we are exiled from the Lord, guided by faith and not yet by sight; we are full of confidence, then, and long instead to be exiled from the body and to be at home with the Lord. And so whether at home or exiled, we make it our ambition to please him. For at the judgment seat of Christ we are all to be seen for what we are, so that each of us may receive what he has deserved in the body, matched to whatever he has done, good or bad.

And so it is with the fear of the Lord always in mind that we try to win people over. But God sees us for what we are, and I hope your consciences do too.

Again we are saying this not to commend ourselves to you, but simply to give you the opportunity to take pride in us, so that you may have an answer for those who take pride in appearances and not inner reality. If we have been unreasonable, it was for God; if reasonable, for you. For the love of Christ overwhelms us when we consider that if one man died for all, then

all have died; his purpose in dying for all humanity was that those who live should live not any more for themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life.

From now onwards, then, we will not consider anyone by human standards: even if we were once familiar with Christ according to human standards, we do not know him in that way any longer. So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order is gone and a new being is there to see. ❖

JUNE 14, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 6

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 4:26-34

Jesus said to the disciples, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, at once he starts to reap because the harvest has come.' He also said, 'What can we say that the kingdom is like? What parable can we find for it? It is like a mustard seed which, at the time of its sowing, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth. Yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.'

Using many parables like these, he spoke the word to them, so far as they were capable of understanding it. He would not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything to his disciples when they were by themselves. ❖

JUNE 21, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 7

THE BOOK OF JOB 38:1-11

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:

“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man,

I will question you, and you shall declare to me.

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements-- surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

On what were its bases sunk,

or who laid its cornerstone

when the morning stars sang together

and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?

“Or who shut in the sea with doors

when it burst out from the womb? --

when I made the clouds its garment,

and thick darkness its swaddling band,

and prescribed bounds for it,

and set bars and doors,

and said, `Thus far shall you come, and no farther,

and here shall your proud waves be stopped’? ❖

JUNE 21, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 7

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 6:1–13

As God's fellow-workers, we urge you not to let your acceptance of God's grace come to nothing. As the Lord said, "At the time of my favor I have answered you; on the day of salvation I have helped you." Well, now is the real time of favor, now the day of salvation is here.

We avoid putting obstacles in anyone's way, so that no blame may attach to our work of service; but in everything we prove ourselves authentic servants of God; by resolute perseverance in times of hardships, difficulties and distress; when we are flogged or sent to prison or mobbed; laboring, sleepless, starving; in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness; in the Holy Spirit, in a love free of affectation; in the word of truth and in the power of God; by using the weapons of uprightness for attack and for defense: in times of honor or disgrace, blame or praise; taken for impostors and yet we are genuine; unknown and yet we are acknowledged; dying, and yet here we are, alive; scourged but not executed; in pain yet always full of

joy; poor and yet making many people rich; having nothing, and yet owning everything.

People of Corinth, we have spoken frankly and opened our heart to you. Any distress you feel is not on our side; the distress is in your own selves. In fair exchange — I speak as though to children of mine — you must open your hearts too. ❖

JUNE 21, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 7

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 4:35–41**

With the coming of evening, Jesus said to the disciples, “Let us cross over to the other side.” And leaving the crowd behind they took him, just as he was, in the boat; and there were other boats with him. Then it began to blow a great gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. But Jesus was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep. They woke him and said to him, “Master, do you not care? We are lost!” And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Quiet now! Be calm!” And the wind dropped, and there followed a great calm.

Then Jesus said to them, “Why are you so frightened? Have you still no faith?” They were overcome with awe and said to one another, “Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.” ❖

JUNE 28, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 8
WISDOM OF SOLOMON 1:13-15; 2:23-24

God did not make death,

And he does not delight in the death of the living.

For he created all things so that they might exist;

the generative forces of the world are wholesome,

and there is no destructive poison in them,

and the dominion of Hades is not on earth.

For righteousness is immortal.

God created us for incorruption,

and made us in the image of his own eternity,

but through the devil's envy death entered the world,

and those who belong to his company experience it. ❖

JUNE 28, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 8

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 8:7–15

As you are rich in everything — faith, eloquence, understanding, concern for everything, and love for us too — then make sure that you excel in the work of generosity, too. I am not saying this as an order, but testing the genuineness of your love against the concern of others.

You are well aware of the generosity which our Lord Jesus Christ had, that, although he was rich, he became poor for your sake, so that you should become rich through his poverty.

I will give you my considered opinion in the matter; this will be the right course for you as you were the first, a year ago, not only to take any action but also even to conceive the project. Now, then, complete the action as well, so that the fulfillment may — so far as your resources permit — be proportionate to your enthusiasm for the project.

As long as the enthusiasm is there, the basis on which it is acceptable is what someone has, not what someone does not have. It is not that you ought to relieve other people's needs and leave yourselves in hardship; but there should be a fair balance — your surplus at present may fill their deficit, and another time their surplus may fill your deficit. So there may be a fair balance; as scripture says: No one who had collected more had too much, no one who collected less had too little. ❖

JUNE 28, 2015

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 8

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 5:21–43**

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered round him and he stayed by the lake. Then the president of the synagogue came up, named Jairus, and seeing him, fell at his feet and begged him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter is desperately sick. Do come and lay your hands on her that she may be saved and may live.” Jesus went with him and a large crowd followed him; they were pressing all round him.

Now there was a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years; after long and painful treatment under various doctors, she had spent all she had without being any the better for it; in fact, she was getting worse. She had heard about Jesus, and she came up through the crowd and touched his cloak from behind, thinking, “If I can just touch his clothes, I shall be saved.” And at once the source of the bleeding dried up, and she felt in herself that she was cured of her complaint.

And at once aware of the power that had gone out from him, Jesus turned round in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples said to him, "You see how the crowd is pressing round you; how can you ask, 'Who touched me?'" But he continued to look all round to see who had done it. Then the woman came forward, frightened and trembling because she knew what had happened to her, and she fell at his feet and told him the whole truth. "My daughter," he said, "your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free of your complaint."

While Jesus was still speaking some people arrived from the house of the president of the synagogue to say, "Your daughter is dead; why put the Master to any further trouble?" But Jesus overheard what they said and he said to the president of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only have faith." And he allowed no one to go with him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. So they came to the house of the president of the synagogue, and Jesus noticed all the commotion, with people weeping and wailing unrestrainedly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and crying? The child is not dead, but asleep." But they ridiculed him.

So he turned them all out and, taking with him the child's father and mother and his own companions, he went into the place where the child lay. And taking the child by the hand he said to her, "Talitha kum!" which means, "Little girl, I tell you to get up." The little girl got up at once and began to walk about, for she was twelve years old. At once they were overcome with astonishment, and he gave them strict orders not to let anyone know about it, and told them to give her something to eat. ❖

JULY 5, 2015

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 9

EZEKIEL 2:1-5

The Lord said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD.” Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them. ❖

JULY 5, 2015

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 9

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 12:2–10

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago — still in the body? I do not know; or out of the body? I do not know, God knows — was caught up right into the third heaven. And I know that this man — still in the body? or outside the body? I do not know, God knows — was caught up into paradise and heard words said that cannot and may not be spoken by any human being. On behalf of someone like that I am willing to boast, but I am not going to boast on my own behalf except of my weaknesses; and then, if I do choose to boast I shall not be talking like a fool because I shall be speaking the truth. But I will not go on in case people should rate me higher than they see and hear me to be, because of the exceptional greatness of the revelations.

Wherefore, so that I should not get above myself, I was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to batter me and prevent me from getting above myself.

About this, I have three times pleaded with the Lord that it might leave me; but I have been answered, “My grace is enough for you: for power is at full stretch in weakness.” It is, then, about my weaknesses that I am happiest of all to boast, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me; and that is why I am glad of weaknesses, insults, constraints, persecutions and distress for Christ’s sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong.



JULY 5, 2015

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 9

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 6:1–13

Jesus went to his hometown, and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue, and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, “Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us?” And they would not accept him. And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is despised only in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house,” and he could work no miracle there, except that he cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Jesus made a tour around the villages, teaching. Then he summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs, giving them authority over unclean spirits.

And he instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff — no bread, no haversack, no coppers for their purses. They were to wear sandals but, he added, “Don’t take a spare tunic.” And he said to them, “If you enter a house anywhere, stay there until you leave the district. And if any place does not welcome you and people refuse to listen to you, as you walk away shake off the dust under your feet as evidence to them.” So they set off to proclaim repentance; and they cast out many devils, and anointed many sick people with oil and cured them. ❖

JULY 12, 2015

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 10

AMOS 7:7-15

This is what the Lord God showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And the LORD said to me, “Amos, what do you see?” And I said, “A plumb line.” Then the Lord said,

“See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass them by; the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the very center of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said,

‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.’“

And Amaziah said to Amos, “O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy

there; but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.”

Then Amos answered Amaziah, “I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’“ ❖

JULY 12, 2015

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 10

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 1:3–14

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Thus God chose us in Christ before the world was made to be holy and faultless before God in love, marking us out beforehand, to be adopted children, through Jesus Christ. Such was God's purpose and good pleasure, to the praise of the glory of grace, the free gift to us in the Beloved, in whom, through his blood, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins.

Such is the richness of the grace which God has showered on us in all wisdom and insight. That One has let us know the mystery of divine purpose, according to the good pleasure which was determined beforehand in Christ, for God to act upon when the times had run their course: that everything would be brought together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth.

And it is in Christ that we have received our heritage, marked out beforehand as we were, under the plan of God who guides all things as is decided by her own

will, chosen to be, for the praise of glory, the people who would put their hopes in Christ before he came. Now you too, in him, have heard the message of the truth and the gospel of your salvation, and having put your trust in it you have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance, for the freedom of the people whom God has taken, for the praise of glory. ❖

JULY 12, 2015

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 10

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 6:14–29**

King Herod had heard about Jesus, since by now his name was well known. Some were saying, “John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.” Others said, “He is Elijah,” others again, “He is a prophet, like the prophets we used to have.” But when Herod heard this he said, “It is John whose head I cut off; he has risen from the dead.”

Now it was this same Herod who had sent to have John arrested, and had had him chained up in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife whom he had married. For John had told Herod, “It is against the law for you to have your brother’s wife.” As for Herodias, she was furious with him and wanted to kill him, but she was not able to do so, because Herod was in awe of John, knowing him to be a good and upright man, and gave him his protection. When he had heard him speak he was greatly perplexed, and yet he liked to listen to him.

An opportunity came on Herod's birthday when he gave a banquet for the nobles of his court, for his army officers and for the leading figures in Galilee. When the daughter of this same Herodias came in and danced, she delighted Herod and his guests; so the king said to the girl, "Ask me anything you like and I will give it you." And he swore her an oath, "I will give you anything you ask, even half my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the Baptist." The girl at once rushed back to the king and made her request, "I want you to give me John the Baptist's head, immediately, on a dish."

The king was deeply distressed but, thinking of the oaths he had sworn and of his guests, he was reluctant to break his word to her. At once the king sent one of the bodyguard with orders to bring John's head. The man went off and beheaded him in the prison; then he brought the head on a dish and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When John's disciples heard about this, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb. ❖

JULY 19, 2015

THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 11

JEREMIAH 23:1-6

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD. The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.” ❖

JULY 19, 2015

THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 11

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 2:11—22

Do not forget that there was a time when you who were gentiles by physical descent—termed the uncircumcised by those who speak of themselves as the circumcised by reason of a physical operation—do not forget, I say, that you were at that time separate from Christ and excluded from membership of Israel, aliens with no part in the covenants of the promise, limited to this world, without hope and without God. But now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far off have been brought close, by the blood of Christ. For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one entity and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, by destroying in his own person the hostility, that is, the Law of commandments with its decrees.

His purpose in this was, by restoring peace, to create a single New Human out of the two of them, and through the cross, to reconcile them both to God in one Body; in his own person he killed the hostility.

He came to bring the good news of peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. Through him, then, we both in the one Spirit have free access to the Father.

So you are no longer aliens or foreign visitors; you are fellow-citizens with the holy people of God and part of God's household. You are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone. Every structure knit together in him grows into a holy temple in the Lord; and you too, in him, are being built up into a dwelling-place of God in the Spirit. ❖

JULY 19, 2015

THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 11

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 6:30-34; 53-56**

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed. ❖

JULY 26, 2015

THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 12

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS 4:42-44

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, “Give it to the people and let them eat.” But his servant said, “How can I set this before a hundred people?” So he repeated, “Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the LORD, ‘They shall eat and have some left.’” He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD. ❖

JULY 26, 2015

THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 12

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 3:14-21

I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every fatherhood, in heaven or on earth, takes its name. In the abundance of his glory may he, through his Spirit, enable you to grow firm in power with regard to your inner self, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, with all God's holy people you will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; so that, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond knowledge, you may be filled with the utter fullness of God.

Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Amen. ❖

JULY 26, 2015

THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 12

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 6:1-21**

Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee—or of Tiberias—and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he had done in curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside and sat down there with his disciples. The time of the Passover was near.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, ‘Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?’ He said this only to put Philip to the test; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered, ‘Two hundred denarii would not buy enough to give them a little piece each.’ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said, ‘Here is a small boy with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that among so many?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Make the people sit down.’ There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand followers sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were sitting there; he then did the same with the fish, distributing as much as they wanted.

When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing is wasted.' So they picked them up and filled twelve large baskets with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. Seeing the sign that he had done, the people said, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, as he realized they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, fled back to the hills alone.

That evening the disciples went down to the shore of the sea and got into a boat to for Capernaum on the other side of the sea. It was getting dark by now and Jesus had still not rejoined them. The wind was strong, and the sea was getting rough. They had rowed three or four miles when they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming towards the boat. They were afraid, but he said, 'It's me. Don't be afraid.' They were ready to take him into the boat, and immediately it reached the shore at the place they were making for. ❖

AUGUST 2, 2015

THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 13

THE BOOK OF EXODUS 16:2-4,9-15

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.’” And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. The LORD spoke to Moses and said, “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat,

and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread;
then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.”“

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp;
and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the
camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface
of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as
frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they
said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know
what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the
LORD has given you to eat.” ❖

AUGUST 2, 2015

THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 13

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS 4:1-16

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the

knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.



AUGUST 2, 2015

THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 13

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 6:24-35**

So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."

Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them,

“Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ❖

AUGUST 9, 2015

THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 14

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS 19:4-8

Elijah went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you." He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. ❖

AUGUST 9, 2015

THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 14

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 4:25-5:2

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ❖

AUGUST 9, 2015

THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 14

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 6:35-51**

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Then the Galileans began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.'

Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and

not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” ❖

AUGUST 16, 2015

THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 15

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS 9:1-6

Wisdom has built her house,

she has hewn her seven pillars.

She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine,

she has also set her table.

She has sent out her servant girls, she calls

from the highest places in the town,

“You that are simple, turn in here!”

To those without sense she says,

“Come, eat of my bread

and drink of the wine I have mixed.

Lay aside immaturity, and live,

and walk in the way of insight.” ❖

AUGUST 16, 2015

THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 15

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 5:15-20

Be very careful about the sort of lives you lead, like intelligent and not like senseless people. Make the best of the present time, for it is a wicked age. This is why you must not be thoughtless, but must recognize what is the will of the Lord. Do not get drunk with wine. This is simply dissipation; be filled with the Spirit. Sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs among yourselves, singing and chanting to the Lord in your hearts, always and everywhere giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ❖

AUGUST 16, 2015

THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 15

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 6:51-58**

Jesus said, "I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world." Then the religious authorities started arguing among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus replied to them: "In all truth I tell you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise that person up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in that person. As the living Father sent me and I draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will also draw life from me. This is the bread which has come down from heaven; it is not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever." ❖

AUGUST 23, 2015

THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 16

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA 24:1-2A,14-18

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel:

“Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the

peoples through whom we passed; and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.” ❖

AUGUST 23, 2015

THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 16

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 6:10-20

Finally, grow strong in the Lord, with the strength of God's power. Put on the full armor of God so as to be able to resist the devil's tactics. For it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the principalities and the ruling forces who are masters of the darkness in this world, the spirits of evil in the heavens. That is why you must take up all God's armor, or you will not be able to put up any resistance on the evil day, or stand your ground even though you exert yourselves to the full.

So stand your ground, with truth a belt round your waist, and uprightness a breastplate, wearing for shoes on your feet the eagerness to spread the gospel of peace and always carrying the shield of faith so that you can use it to quench the burning arrows of the Evil One. And then you must take salvation as your helmet and the sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God.

In all your prayer and entreaty keep praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion. Never get tired of staying awake to pray for all God's holy people, and pray for me to be given an opportunity to open my mouth and fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel of which I am an ambassador in chains; pray that in proclaiming it I may speak as fearlessly as I ought to.



AUGUST 23, 2015

THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 16

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 6:56-69**

Jesus said, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in that person. As the living Father sent me and I draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will also draw life from me. This is the bread which has come down from heaven; it is not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.”

This is what Jesus taught at Capernaum in the synagogue. After hearing it, many of his followers said, “This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?” Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and said, “Does this disturb you? What if you should see the Son of man ascend to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh has nothing to offer. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the outset who not believe and who was to betray him. He went

on, “This is why I told you that no one could come to me except by the gift of the Father.”

After this, many of his disciples went away and accompanied him no more. Then Jesus said to the Twelve, “What about you, do you want to go away too?” Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.” ❖

AUGUST 30, 2015

THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 17

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY 4:1-2, 6-9

Moses said: So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God with which I am charging you. You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!” For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children. ❖

AUGUST 30, 2015

THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 17

THE LETTER OF JAMES 1:17-27

All that is good, all that is perfect, is given us from above; it comes down from the Father of all light; with him there is no such thing as alteration, no shadow caused by change.

By his own choice he gave birth to us by the message of the truth so that we should be a sort of first fruits of all his creation.

Remember this, my dear brothers and sisters: everyone should be quick to listen but slow to speak and slow to human anger. God's saving justice is never served by human anger, so do away with all impurities and remnants of evil. Humbly welcome the Word which has been planted in you and can save your souls.

But you must do what the Word tells you and not just listen to it and deceive yourselves. Those who listen to the Word and take no action are like those who look at their own features in a mirror and, once they have seen what they look like, go off and immediately forget it. But those who look steadily at the perfect law of

freedom and keep to it — not listening and forgetting, but putting it into practice — will be blessed in every undertaking.

Nobody who fails to keep a tight rein on the tongue can claim to be religious; this is mere self-deception; that person's religion is worthless. Pure, unspoiled religion, in the eyes of God our Father, is this: coming to the help of orphans and widows in their hardships, and keeping oneself uncontaminated by the world. ❖

AUGUST 30, 2015

THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 17

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO

MARK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered round Jesus, and they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with unclean hands, that is, without washing them. For the Pharisees keep the tradition of the elders and never eat without washing their arms as far as the elbow; and on returning from the market place they never eat without first sprinkling themselves. There are also many other observances which have been handed down to them to keep, concerning the washing of cups and pots and bronze dishes.

So the Pharisees and scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not respect the tradition of the elders but eat their food with unclean hands?” Jesus answered, “How rightly Isaiah prophesied about you hypocrites in the passage of scripture: This people honors me only with lip-service, while their hearts are far from me. Their reverence of me is worthless; lessons they teach are

nothing but human commandments. You put aside the commandment of God to observe human traditions.”

Jesus called the people to him again and said, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that goes into someone from outside can make that person unclean; it is the things that come out of someone that make that person unclean. For it is from within, from the heart, that evil intentions emerge: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within and make a person unclean.” ❖

SEPTEMBER 6, 2015

THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 18

THE PROPHET ISAIAH 35:4-7A

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,

with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

then the lame shall leap like a deer,

and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,

and streams in the desert;

the burning sand shall become a pool,

and the thirsty ground springs of water. ❖

SEPTEMBER 6, 2015

THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 18

THE LETTER OF JAMES 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17

My brothers and sisters, do not let class distinction enter into your faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord. Now suppose a person comes into your synagogue, well-dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor person comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed person, and say, "Come this way to the best seats," then you tell the poor person, "Stand over there" or "You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest." In making this distinction among yourselves have you not used a corrupt standard?

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: it was those who were poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which were promised to those who love God. You, on the other hand, have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who lord it over you? Are not they the ones who drag you into court, who insult the honorable name which has been pronounced over you? Well, the right thing to do is to keep the supreme Law of scripture: you will love your neighbor as yourself; but as soon as you make

class distinctions, you are committing sin and under condemnation for breaking the Law.

You see, anyone who keeps the whole of the Law but trips up on a single point, is still guilty of breaking it all. How does it help, my brothers and sisters, when someone who has never done a single good act claims to have faith? Will that faith bring salvation? If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, "I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty," without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? In the same way faith, if good deeds do not go with it, is quite dead. ❖

SEPTEMBER 6, 2015

THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 18

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 7:24-37**

Jesus left and set out for the territory of Tyre. There he went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there; but he could not pass unrecognized. At once a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him and came and fell at his feet. Now this woman was a gentile, by birth a Syro-Phoenician, and she begged him to drive the devil out of her daughter. And he said to her, "The children should be fed first, because it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to little dogs." But she spoke up, "Ah yes, sir," she replied, "but little dogs under the table eat the scraps from the children." And he said to her, "For saying this you may go home happy; the devil has gone out of your daughter." So she went off home and found the child lying on the bed and the devil gone.

Returning from the territory of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Lake of Galilee, right through the Decapolis territory. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked

him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside to be by themselves, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, and at once the impediment of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly.

And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they proclaimed it. Their admiration was unbounded, and they said, "Everything he does is good; he makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." ❖

SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 19

THE PROPHET ISAIAH 50:4-9A

The Lord GOD has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens--
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.

I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

The Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?

Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?

Let them confront me.

It is the Lord GOD who helps me;

who will declare me guilty? ❖

SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 19

THE LETTER OF JAMES 3:1-12

Only a few of you, my brothers and sisters, should be teachers, bearing in mind that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all trip up in many ways. Someone who does not trip up in speech has reached perfection and is able to keep the whole body on a tight rein. Once we put a bit in the horse's mouth, to make it do what we want, we have the whole animal under our control. Or think of ships: no matter how big they are, even if a gale is driving them, they are directed by a tiny rudder wherever the whim of the helmsman decides.

So the tongue is only a tiny part of the body, but its boasts are great. Think how small a flame can set fire to a huge forest; the tongue is a flame too. Among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a whole wicked world: it infects the whole body; catching fire itself from hell, it sets fire to the whole wheel of creation. Wild animals and birds, reptiles and fish of every kind can all be tamed, and have been tamed, by humans; but nobody can tame the tongue — it is a pest that will not keep still, full of deadly poison. We use it to bless the Lord

and Father, but we also use it to curse people who are made in God's image: the blessing and curse come out of the same mouth.

My brothers and sisters, this must be wrong — does any water supply give a flow of fresh water and salt water out of the same pipe? Can a fig tree yield olives, my brothers and sisters, or a vine yield figs? No more can seawater yield fresh water. ❖

SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 19

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 8:27-38**

Jesus and his disciples left for the villages round Caesarea Philippi. On the way he put this question to his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" And they told him, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, others again, one of the prophets." "But you," he asked them, "who do you say I am?" Peter spoke up and said to him, "You are the Christ." And he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone about him.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of man was destined to suffer grievously, and to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be put to death, and after three days to rise again; and he said all this quite openly. Then, taking him aside, Peter tried to rebuke him. But, turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said to him, "Get behind me, Satan! You are thinking not as God thinks, but as human beings do."

Jesus called the people and his disciples to him and said, “If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let her renounce herself and take up her cross and follow me. Anyone who wants to save her life will lose it; but anyone who loses her life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. What gain, then, is it for anyone to win the whole world and forfeit her life? And indeed what can anyone offer in exchange for her life? For if anyone in this sinful and adulterous generation is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of man will also be ashamed of that one when she comes in the glory of God with the holy angels.” ❖

SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 20
THE PROPHET JEREMIAH 11:18-20

It was the LORD who made it known to me, and I
knew; then you showed me their evil deeds.

But I was like a gentle lamb

led to the slaughter.

And I did not know it was against me

that they devised schemes, saying,

“Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,

let us cut him off from the land of the living,

so that his name will no longer be remembered!”

But you, O LORD of hosts, who judge righteously,

who try the heart and the mind,

let me see your retribution upon them,

for to you I have committed my cause. ❖

SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 20

THE BOOK OF JAMES 3:13-4:3, 7-8A

Anyone who is wise or understanding among you should from a good life give evidence of deeds done in the gentleness of wisdom. But if at heart you have the bitterness of jealousy, or selfish ambition, do not be boastful or hide the truth with lies; this is not the wisdom that comes from above, but earthly, human and devilish. Wherever there are jealousy and ambition, there are also disharmony and wickedness of every kind; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it is also peaceable, kindly and considerate; it is full of mercy and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. The peace sown by peacemakers brings a harvest of justice.

Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Is it not precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you lack it; so you kill. You have an ambition that you cannot satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force. It is because you do not pray that you do not receive;

when you do pray and do not receive, it is because you prayed wrongly, wanting to indulge your passions. Give in to God, then; resist the devil, and that one will run away from you. The nearer you go to God, the nearer God will come to you. ❖

SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 20
THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 9:30-37

Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, “The Son of man will be delivered into the power of human culture; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again.” But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him.

They came to Capernaum, and when Jesus got into the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” They said nothing, because on the road they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. So he sat down, called the Twelve to him and said, “Whoever wants to be first, must be last of all and servant of all.” He then took a little child whom he set among them and embraced, and he said to them, “Anyone who welcomes a little child such as this in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes not me but the one who sent me.” ❖

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 21

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS 11:4-6,10-16,24-29

The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, “If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.” Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the LORD became very angry, and Moses was displeased. So Moses said to the LORD, “Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child,’ to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once--if I have

found favor in your sight--and do not let me see my misery.”

So the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you.” So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, “My lord Moses, stop them!” But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!” ❖

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 21

THE BOOK OF JAMES 5:13-20

All of you who are in trouble should pray; all in good spirits should sing a psalm. All of you who are ill should send for the elders of the church, who must anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord and pray over them. The prayer of faith will save them and the Lord will raise them up again; if they have committed any sins, they will be forgiven. So confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another to be cured; the heartfelt prayer of someone upright works very powerfully. Elijah was a human being as frail as we — he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and no rain fell for three and a half years. Then he prayed again and the sky gave rain and the earth gave crops.

My brothers and sisters, if one of you strays away from the truth, and is brought back by another, you may be sure that anyone who can bring back a sinner from erring ways will be saving a soul from death and covering over many a sin. ❖

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 21

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 9:38-50**

John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw someone who is not one of us driving out devils in your name, and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him." But Jesus said, "You must not stop him; no one who works a miracle in my name could soon afterwards speak evil of me.

"Anyone who is not against us is for us. All who give you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, then in truth I tell you, they will most certainly not lose their reward. But all who are the downfall of one of these little ones who have faith, would be better thrown into the sea with a great mill stone hung round their necks.

"And if your hand should be your downfall, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life crippled, than to have two hands and go to hell, into the fire that can never be put out. And if your foot should be your downfall, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life lame, than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye

should be your down fall, tear it out; it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell where their worm will never die nor their fire be put out.

“For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is a good thing, but if salt has become insipid, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.” ❖

OCTOBER 4, 2015

THE NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 22

THE BOOK OF GENESIS 2:18-24

The LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.” Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. ❖

OCTOBER 4, 2015

THE NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 22

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 1:1–4; 2:5–12

At many moments in the past and by many means, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our time, the final days, God has spoken to us in the person of his Son, whom God appointed heir of all things and through whom God made the ages. He is the reflection of God's glory and bears the impress of God's own being, sustaining all things by his powerful command; and now that he has purged sins away, he has taken his seat at the right hand of the divine Majesty on high. So he is now as far above the angels, as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

It was not under angels that God put the world to come, about which we are speaking. Someone witnesses to this somewhere with the words: "What are human beings that you spare a thought for them, a child of Adam that you care for him? For a short while you have made him less than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, put all things under his feet."

For in putting all things under him, God made no exceptions. At present, it is true, we are not able to see

that all things are under him, but we do see Jesus, who was for a short while made less than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he submitted to death; so that by God's grace his experience of death should benefit all humanity.

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should, in bringing many sons to glory, make perfect through suffering the leader of their salvation. For consecrator and consecrated are all of the same stock; that is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters in the text: "I shall proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, praise you in full assembly." ❖

OCTOBER 4, 2015

THE NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 22

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 10:13–16

People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples scolded them, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. In truth I tell you, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” Then he embraced them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing. ❖

OCTOBER 11, 2015

THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 23

THE BOOK OF AMOS 5:6-7,10-15

Seek the LORD and live, or he will break out against
the house of Joseph like fire,

and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.

Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,

and bring righteousness to the ground!

They hate the one who reproves in the gate,

and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.

Therefore because you trample on the poor

and take from them levies of grain,

you have built houses of hewn stone,

but you shall not live in them;

you have planted pleasant vineyards,

but you shall not drink their wine.

For I know how many are your transgressions,

and how great are your sins--

you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,

and push aside the needy in the gate.

Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time;

for it is an evil time.

Seek good and not evil,

that you may live;
and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you,
just as you have said.

Hate evil and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. ❖

OCTOBER 11, 2015

THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 23

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 4:12–16

The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts more incisively than any two-edged sword: it can seek out the place where soul is divided from spirit, or joints from marrow; it can pass judgment on secret emotions and thoughts. No created thing is hidden from God; everything is uncovered and stretched fully open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give account of ourselves.

Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme high priest who has gone through to the highest heaven, we must hold firm to our profession of faith. For the high priest we have is not incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us, but has been put to the test in exactly the same way as ourselves, apart from sin. Let us, then, have no fear in approaching the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace when we are in need of help. ❖

OCTOBER 11, 2015

THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 23

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 10:17–31

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, “Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not give false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.”

And the man said to Jesus, “Master, I have kept all these since my earliest days.” Jesus looked steadily at him and he was filled with love for him, and he said, “You need to do one thing more. Go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” But the man’s face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were astounded by these words, but Jesus insisted, “My children,” he said to them, “how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of God.” They were more astonished than ever, saying to one another, “In that case, who can be saved?” Jesus gazed at them and said, “By human resources it is impossible, but not for God: because for God everything is possible.”

Peter took this up. “Look,” he said to him, “we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “In truth I tell you, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children or land for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times as much, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and land — and persecutions too — now in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life. Many who are first will be last, and the last, first.” ❖

OCTOBER 18, 2015

THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 24

THE PROPHET ISAIAH 53:4-12

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;

yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

By a perversion of justice he was taken away.

Who could have imagined his future?

For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.

They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.
Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.
When you make his life an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.
Out of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many
righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors. ❖

OCTOBER 18, 2015

THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 24

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 5:1–10

Every high priest is taken from among human beings and is appointed to act on their behalf in relationships with God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins; the high priest can sympathize with those who are ignorant or who have gone astray, being themselves subject to the same limitations of weakness. That is why the priest has to make sin offerings for themselves as well as for the people. People do not take this honor on themselves; it needs a call from God, as in Aaron's case. And so it was not Christ who gave himself the glory of becoming high priest, but the one who said to him: "You are my Son, today I have created you," and in another text: "You are a priest for ever, of the order of Melchizedek." During his life on earth, he offered up prayer and entreaty, with loud cries and with tears, to the one who had the power to save him from death, and, winning a hearing by his reverence, he learnt obedience, Son though he was, through his sufferings; when he had been perfected, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation and was acclaimed by God with the title of high priest of the order of Melchizedek. ❖

OCTOBER 18, 2015

THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 24
THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus. “Master,” they said to him, “We want you to do us a favor.” He said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” They said to him, “Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory.” But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I shall drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I shall be baptized?” They replied, “We can.”

Jesus said to them, “The cup that I shall drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I shall be baptized you shall be baptized, but as for seats at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted.”

When the other ten apostles heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John, so Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that among the gentiles those they call their rulers lord it over them, and the powerful among them make their authority felt.

Among you this is not to happen. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of man himself came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” ❖

OCTOBER 25, 2015

THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 25

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH 31:7-9

Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.”

See, I am going to bring them from the land of the
north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the
earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with
child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn. ❖

OCTOBER 25, 2015

THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 25

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 7:23-28

Further, the former priests were many in number, because death put an end to each one of them; but this one, because he remains forever, has a perpetual priesthood. It follows, then, that his power to save those who come to God through him is absolute, since he lives forever to intercede for them.

Such is the high priest that met our need, holy, innocent and uncontaminated, set apart from sinners, and raised up above the heavens; he has no need to offer sacrifices every day, as the high priests do, first for their own sins and only then for those of the people; this he did once and for all by offering himself. The Law appoints high priests who are human, and subject to weakness; but the promise on oath, which came after the Law, appointed the Son who is made perfect forever. ❖

OCTOBER 25, 2015

THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 25
THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 10:46–52

They reached Jericho; and as Jesus left Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus — that is, the son of Timaeus — a blind beggar, was sitting at the side of the road. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and cry out, “Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me.” And many of them scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he only shouted all the louder, “Son of David, have pity on me.”

Jesus stopped and said, “Call him here.” So they called the blind man over. “Courage,” they said, “get up; he is calling you.” So throwing off his cloak, he jumped up and went to Jesus. Then Jesus spoke, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “Rabbuni, let me see again.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has saved you.” And at once his sight returned and he followed him along the road. ❖

NOVEMBER 1, 2015

ALL SAINT'S DAY

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON 3:1-9

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever. Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect. ❖

NOVEMBER 1, 2015

ALL SAINT'S DAY

THE REVELATION OF JOHN 21:1-6A

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ❖

NOVEMBER 1, 2015

ALL SAINT'S DAY

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 11:32-44**

When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the people who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the people said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear

me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.’ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’ ❖

NOVEMBER 8, 2015

THE TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 27 – O WISDOM

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS 17:8-16

The word of the LORD came to Elijah, saying, “Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.” As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” But she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the LORD sends rain on the earth.” She went and did as Elijah said, so

that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah. ❖

NOVEMBER 8, 2015

THE TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 27 – O WISDOM

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 9:24–28

It is not as though Christ had entered a man-made sanctuary which was merely a model of the real one; he entered heaven itself, so that he now appears in the presence of God on our behalf. And he does not have to offer himself again and again, as the high priest goes into the sanctuary year after year with the blood that is not his own, or else he would have had to suffer over and over again since the world began. As it is, he has made his appearance once and for all, at the end of the last age, to do away with sin by sacrificing himself. Since human beings die only once, after which comes judgment, so Christ too, having offered himself only once to bear the sin of many, will manifest himself a second time, sin being no more, to those who are waiting for him, to bring them salvation. ❖

NOVEMBER 8, 2015

THE TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 27 – O WISDOM

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 12:38–44

In his teaching Jesus said, “Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted respectfully in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets; these are the men who devour the property of widows and for show offer long prayers. The sentence they receive will be severe.”

He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “In truth I tell you, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have all put in money they could spare, but she in her poverty has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on.” ❖

NOVEMBER 15, 2015

THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 28 – O ADONAI

THE BOOK OF DANIEL 12:1-3

The Lord spoke to Daniel in a vision and said, “At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” ❖

NOVEMBER 15, 2015

THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 28 – O ADONAI

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 10:11–14; 19–25

Every priest stands at his duties every day, offering over and over again the same sacrifices which are quite incapable of taking away sins. Christ, on the other hand, has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and then taken his seat for ever, at the right hand of God, where he is now waiting till his enemies are made his footstool. By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all who are sanctified.

When these have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings. We have then, brothers, complete confidence through the blood of Jesus in entering the sanctuary, by a new way which he has opened for us, a living opening through the curtain, that is to say, his flesh. And we have the high priest over all the sanctuary of God.

So as we go in, let us be sincere in heart and filled with faith, our hearts sprinkled and free from any trace of bad conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us keep firm in the hope we profess, because the

one who made the promise is trustworthy. Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works. Do not absent yourself from your own assemblies, as some do, but encourage each other; the more so as you see the Day drawing near. ❖

NOVEMBER 15, 2015

THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 28 – O ADONAI

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO MARK 13:1–8

As Jesus was leaving the Temple one of his disciples said to him, “Master, look at the size of those stones! Look at the size of those buildings!” And Jesus said to him, “You see these great buildings? Not a single stone will be left on another; everything will be pulled down.”

And while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, facing the Temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew questioned him when they were by themselves, “Tell us, when is this going to happen, and what sign will there be that it is all about to take place?”

Then Jesus began to tell them, “Take care that no one deceives you. Many will come using my name and saying, ‘I am he,’ and they will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this is something that must happen, but the end will not be yet. For nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is the beginning of the birth-pangs.” ❖

NOVEMBER 22, 2015

THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

O THE REIGN OF CHRIST – O REX GENTIUM

THE BOOK OF DANIEL 7:9-10, 13-14

As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed. ❖

NOVEMBER 22, 2015

THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

O THE REIGN OF CHRIST — O REX GENTIUM

A READING FROM THE REVELATION OF JOHN 1:4B—8

Grace and peace to you from the One who is, who was, and who is to come, from the seven spirits who are before the throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the First-born from the dead, the highest of earthly rulers. He loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood, and made us a Kingdom of Priests to serve his God and Creator; to him, then, be glory and power forever and ever. Amen. Look, he is coming on the clouds; everyone will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the races of the earth will mourn over him. Indeed this shall be so. Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. ❖

NOVEMBER 22, 2015

THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

O THE REIGN OF CHRIST — O REX GENTIUM

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO
JOHN 18:33–37**

So Pilate went back into the Praetorium and called Jesus to him and asked him, “Are you the king of the Judeans?” Jesus replied, “Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others said it to you about me?” Pilate answered, “Am I a Judean? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?” Jesus replied, “Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the authorities. As it is, my kingdom does not belong here.” Pilate said, “So, then you are a king?” Jesus answered, “It is you who say that I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.” ❖

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O EMMANUEL

A READING FROM THE PROPHET JEREMIAH 33:14-16

Look, the days are coming, the LORD declares, when I shall fulfill the promise of happiness I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah: In those days and at that time, I shall make an upright branch grow for David, who will do what is just and upright in the country. In those days Judah will triumph and Israel live in safety. And this is the name the city will be called: “ the LORD-is-our-Saving-Justice.” ❖

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O EMMANUEL

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS 3:9-13

How can we thank God enough for you, for all the joy we feel before our God on your account? We are earnestly praying night and day to be able to see you face to face again and make up any shortcomings in your faith.

May God our Creator himself, and our Lord Jesus, ease our path to you. May God increase and enrich your love for each other and for all, so that it matches ours for you. And may God so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Creator when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. ❖

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O EMMANUEL

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO LUKE 21:25-36**

Jesus said to them: “There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the turmoil of the ocean and its waves; people fainting away with terror and fear at what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.”

And he told them a parable, “Look at the fig tree and indeed every tree. As soon as you see them bud, you can see for yourselves that summer is now near. So with you when you see these things happening: know that the kingdom of God is near. In truth I tell you, before this generation has passed away all will have taken place.

Sky and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

“Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened by debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will come upon you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come down on all those living on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to hold your ground before the Son of man.” ❖

DECEMBER 6, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O ROOT OF JESSE

THE PROPHET BARUCH 5:1-9

Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress, put on the beauty of God's glory for evermore, wrap the cloak of God's saving justice around you, put the diadem of the Eternal One's glory on your head, for God means to show your splendor to every nation under heaven, and the name God gives you for evermore will be, Peace-through-Justice, and Glory-through-Devotion.

Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights and turn your eyes to the east; see your children reassembled from west and east at the Holy One's command, rejoicing because God has remembered.

Though they left you on foot driven by enemies, now God brings them back to you, carried gloriously, like a royal throne. For God has decreed the flattening of each high mountain, of the everlasting hills, the filling of the valleys to make the ground level so that Israel can walk safely in God's glory. And the forests and every fragrant tree will provide shade for Israel, at God's command; for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his glory, with the mercy and saving justice which come from him. ❖

DECEMBER 6, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O ROOT OF JESSE

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

I thank my God whenever I think of you and every time pray for you all, I always pray with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the very first day up to the present. I am quite confident that the One who began a good work in you will go on completing it until the Day of Jesus Christ comes. It is only right that I should feel like this towards you all, because you have a place in my heart, since you have all shared together in the grace that has been mine, both my chains and my work defending and establishing the gospel. For God will testify for me how much I long for you all the warm longing of Christ Jesus; it is my prayer that your love for one another may grow more and more with the knowledge and complete understanding that will help you to come to true discernment, so that you will be innocent and free of any trace of guilt when the Day of Christ comes, entirely filled with the fruits of uprightness through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God. ❖

DECEMBER 6, 2015

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O ROOT OF JESSE

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO LUKE 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilot was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the territories of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lyusanias tetrarch of Abilene, and while the high priesthood was held by Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah, in the desert. He went through the whole Jordan area proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of Isaiah the prophet:

A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight! Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be leveled, winding ways straightened and rough roads made smooth, and all people will see the salvation of God. ❖

DECEMBER 13, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O KEY OF DAVID

THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH 3:14-20

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion, Israel, shout aloud!
Rejoice, exult with all your heart, son of Jerusalem! the LORD has repealed your sentence; God has turned your enemy away. the LORD is among you, Israel, you have nothing more to fear. When that Day comes, the message for Jerusalem will be: Zion, have no fear, do not let your hands fall limp. The LORD your God is there with you, the Savior. God will rejoice over you with happy song, will renew you by his love, will dance with shouts of joy for you, on a day of festival.

“I have taken away your misfortune, no longer need you bear the disgrace of it. I am taking action here and now against your oppressors. When that time comes I will rescue the lame, and gather the strays, and I will win them praise and renown when I restore their fortunes. At that time I shall be your guide, at the time when I gather you in, I shall give you praise and renown among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes under your own eyes,” declares the LORD. ❖

DECEMBER 13, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O KEY OF DAVID

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

Always be joyful, then, in the Lord; I repeat, be joyful. Let your good sense be obvious to everybody. The Lord is near. Never worry about anything; but tell God all your desires of every kind in prayer and petition shot through with gratitude, and the peace of God which is beyond our understanding will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. ❖

DECEMBER 13, 2015

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O KEY OF DAVID

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO LUKE 3:7-18

John said, therefore, to the crowds who came to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming retribution? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not start telling yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Yes, even now the axe is being laid to the root of the trees, so that any tree failing to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire.”

When all the people asked him, “What must we do, then?” John answered, “Anyone who has two tunics must share with the one who has none, and anyone with something to eat must do the same.” There were tax collectors, too, who came for baptism, and these said to him, “Master, what must we do?” John said to them, “Exact no more than the appointed rate.” Some soldiers asked him in their turn, “What about us? What must we do?” John said to them, “No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!”

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to wonder whether John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, “I baptize you with water, but someone is coming, who is more powerful than me, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.” And he proclaimed the good news to the people with many other exhortations too. ❖

DECEMBER 20, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O DAYSPRING

THE PROPHET MICAH 5:2-5A

Hence the LORD will abandon them only until she who is in labor gives birth, and then those who survive of his race will be reunited to the Israelites. He will take his stand and he will shepherd them with the power of the LORD, with the majesty of the name of God, and they will be secure, for his greatness will extend henceforth to the most distant parts of the country. He himself will be peace! ❖

DECEMBER 20, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O DAYSPRING

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 10:5–10

And that is why Christ said, on coming into the world: “You wanted no sacrifice or grain offering, but you gave me a body. You took no pleasure in burnt offering or sacrifice for sin; then I said, ‘Here I am, I am coming,’ in the scroll of the book it is written of me, to do your will, God.”

He says first “You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the cereal offerings, the burnt offerings and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them;” and then he says: “Here I am! I am coming to do your will.” He is abolishing the first sort to establish the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ made once and for all. ❖

DECEMBER 20, 2015

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - O DAYSPRING

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO LUKE 1:39-45, (46-55)**

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord? Look, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

And Mary said:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; because you, God, have looked upon the humiliation of your servant.

Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me.

Holy is your name, O God, your faithful love extends age after age to those who fear you.

You have used the power of your arm, you have routed the arrogant of heart.

You have pulled down princes from their thrones and raised high the lowly.

You have filled the starving with good things, sent the rich away empty.

You have come to the help of Israel your servant, mindful of your faithful love, according to the promise you made to our ancestors, of your mercy to Abraham and to his descendants forever. ❖

DECEMBER 27, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

A READING FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH 61:10-62:3

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.

The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the
LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ❖

DECEMBER 27, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

3:23-25; 4:4-7

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. ❖

DECEMBER 27, 2015

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

**THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING
TO JOHN 1:1-18**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. ❖