**Diocesan Mission for Renewing the Faith**

**Lectionary Year C**

**Preaching Plan**

**Stages (Based on Creed)**

1. I believe—Advent and Christmas
2. **I believe in God, the Father Almighty—Baptism of the Lord till 27 February**
3. I believe in the Son—Lent
4. I believe in the Holy Spirit, Church—Easter

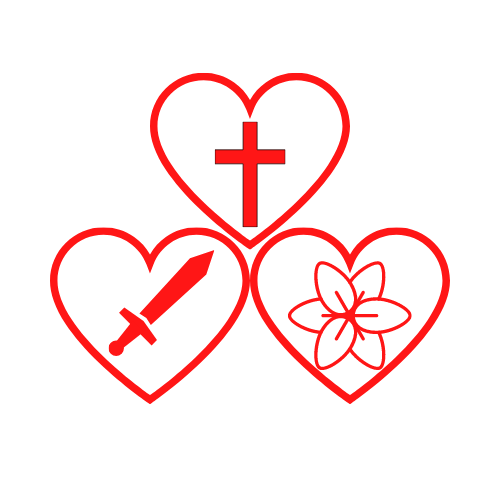
**Themes (central to each stage)**

1. God comes to us and speaks in His Word (Heb. 1:1-2; CCC 65)
2. **The Almighty Lord (CCC 268-274): I am Who am (Ex. 3:14; CCC 206-209)**
3. Jesus Christ is Lord (Ph. 2:6-11; CCC 446)
4. Love has been poured into our hearts (Rom. 5:5; CCC 733-736)

**Liturgical Note**

In this season of Ordinary Time (*Tempus per Annum),* the possibilities afforded us in the privileged seasons of the year are not present, i.e. a systematic presentation of the Catechism does not as easily flow from the Lectionary readings. Therefore, for stage two of this diocesan mission (Baptism of the Lord through the 8th Sunday of Ordinary Time) and in accordance with *GIRM* 65,[[1]](#footnote-1) the catechetical instruction to be provided will be a systematic and extended presentation of the first article of the Creed: *I believe in God, the Father Almighty.*

Additionally, the themes of the Prefaces during this season will not be provided for the same reason.



**Stage 2: Tempus per Annum I (HD 140-149)**

**Baptism of the Lord (HD 131-139)**

* Introit
  + After the Lord was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.
* Collect
  + O God, whose Only Begotten Son has appeared in our very flesh, grant, we pray, that we may be **inwardly transformed** through him whom we recognize as outwardly like ourselves.
    - The Baptism is an extension of Epiphany (like Wedding at Cana next week)
* Communio
  + Behold the One of whom John said: I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.
* Catechism
  + CCC 238-240: God as Father
  + CCC 232-234, 535-537, 1265: Baptism of Jesus and the Christian’s assimilation into it through baptism

**Reading I**

[Is 42:1-4, 6-7](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/42?1)

Thus says the LORD: Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, **upon whom I have put my spirit**; he shall bring forth justice to the nations, not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street. A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench, until he establishes justice on the earth; the coastlands will wait for his teaching. I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; **I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness**.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/29?1)

R. (11b) **The Lord will bless his people with peace.**  
Give to the LORD, you sons of God,  
            give to the LORD glory and praise,  
Give to the LORD the glory due his name;  
            adore the LORD in holy attire.  
R. **The Lord will bless his people with peace.**  
The voice of the LORD is over the waters,  
            the LORD, over vast waters.  
The voice of the LORD is mighty;  
            the voice of the LORD is majestic.   
R. **The Lord will bless his people with peace.**  
The God of glory thunders,  
            and in his temple all say, “Glory!”  
The LORD is enthroned above the flood;  
            the LORD is enthroned as king forever.  
R. **The Lord will bless his people with peace.**

**Reading II**

[Ti 2:11-14; 3:4-7](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/titus/2?11)

Beloved: The **grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires** and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good. When the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, **not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy**, He saved us through the **bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit**, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become **heirs in hope** of eternal life.

**Alleluia**

[Cf. Mk 9:7](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/mark/9?7)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
The heavens were opened and the voice of the Father thundered:  
This is my beloved Son, listen to him.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 3:15-16, 21-22](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/3?15)

The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, **heaven was opened** and the **Holy Spirit** descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a **voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son**; with you I am well pleased.”

**Homily Points**

1. From earliest times, Epiphany has been connected to the Baptism and the Wedding at Cana
   * Epiphany = revelation, and in each of these, Jesus is being revealed as God
     + The wise men come and adore Him: something due God alone
     + At the baptism, the Father reveals Jesus as His Son
     + At wedding, Jesus performs a miracle only God can do
   * In all this, God is revealing Himself in Christ
     + Showing Himself as Triune: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
       - In Jesus, God is finally telling His people the fullness of Who He is
2. Today this happens in the baptism of Jesus
   * The whole Trinity is seen and heard: Father speaks, Son is baptized, Spirit descends
   * “The heavens are opened” suggesting that some new thing is happening: God is unveiling Himself, showing himself in a new way
   * At this moment, Jesus’ public ministry begins, His mission starts
     + His mission, as Isaiah puts it, is to be light and deliverance, to be the New Covenant promised of old; to bring justice and salvation to God’s people
     + God the Father inaugurates this mission spectacularly: people see Jesus as the anointed, the Messiah, the Christ—He is the One sent by God and anointed by His Spirit
3. None of this is only in the past
   * It happens *today,* before our eyes and in our hearts
     + The Letter of Titus points out that this also belongs to us now, all by the grace and mercy of God, and not for any merit of our own: God loves us that much
       - The mission of Jesus results in the Cross, in our salvation, and is the beginning of our own baptism—our own immersion into Christ’s death and resurrection
       - Because of Christian baptism—“bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit”—we are made “heirs of hope
       - All that happened in Jesus’ baptism is given to us: we are made sons and daughters
         * At every baptism, the Father says “This day have I begotten you,” “You are my son/daughter”
         * At every baptism, heaven is opened again and mankind is “inwardly transformed” (Collect)
4. This inward transformation cannot be a one-time thing
   * Paul points out throughout his letter to Titus that God’s revelation must lead to particular moral behavior, daily following Christ and living out baptism
   * Because God has revealed Himself in a particular way, we must behave and respond in a particular way: “reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age”
   * In other words, we must act like sons and daughters, not like slaves and knaves

**Second Sunday per Annum: I believe in one God**

* Introit
  + All the earth shall bow down before you, O God, and shall sing to you, shall sing to your name, O Most High!
* Collect
  + Almighty ever-living **God**, who govern all things, both in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the pleading of your people and bestow your peace on our times.
* Communio
  + You have prepared a table before me, and how precious is the chalice that quenches my thirst.
* Catechism
  + CCC 200-202: One God, One Lord

**Reading I**

[Is 62:1-5](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/62?1)

For Zion’s sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until her vindication shines forth like the dawn and her victory like a burning torch. Nations shall behold your vindication, and all the kings your glory; you shall be called by a new name pronounced by the mouth of the LORD. You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of the LORD, a royal diadem held by your God. No more shall people call you “Forsaken, “or your land “Desolate,” but you shall be called “My Delight,” and your land “Espoused.” For the LORD delights in you and makes your land his spouse. As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/96?1)

R. (3)**Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.**  
Sing to the LORD a new song;  
            sing to the LORD, all you lands.  
Sing to the LORD; bless his name.  
R. **Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.**  
Announce his salvation, day after day.  
Tell his glory among the nations;  
            among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.  
R. **Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.**  
Give to the LORD, you families of nations,  
            give to the LORD glory and praise;  
            give to the LORD the glory due his name!   
R. **Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.**  
Worship the LORD in holy attire.  
            Tremble before him, all the earth;  
Say among the nations: The LORD is king.  
            He governs the peoples with equity.  
R. **Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.**

**Reading II**

[1 Cor 12:4-11](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/12?4)

Brothers and sisters: There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another, the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another, mighty deeds; to another, prophecy; to another, discernment of spirits; to another, varieties of tongues; to another, interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

**Alleluia**

[Cf. 2 Thes 2:14](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/2thessalonians/2?14)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
God has called us through the Gospel  
to possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Jn 2:1-11](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/john/2?1)

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from— although the servers who had drawn the water knew —,the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

**Homily Points**

1. In Advent we began our discussion of the Creed with “I believe”
   * What is faith, what is it to believe
   * This allowed us to begin an exploration of the Creed as the fundament of our faith: “This Creed is the spiritual seal, our heart's meditation and an ever-present guardian; it is, unquestionably, the treasure of our soul” (St. Ambrose)
     + As we continue, important to ask ourselves, do we think of the Creed this way, as a guardian and treasure? Or is it just the part after the homily that we have to mutter through
     + The Creed, our faith, is our most treasured gift, and we must know it well and live it
       - “Faith is a gift, because it is God who takes the initiative and comes to meet us, and like this the faith is an answer by which we receive him as the permanent foundation of our life. It is a gift that changes our existence, because it makes us enter into Jesus’ own vision, which works in us and opens us to love for God and for others.” (Pope Benedict XVI, Wednesday Audience, 31 October 2012)
2. Today we begin a new section: belief in *One God*, and until Lent we will discuss God the Father
   * From the beginning, God has revealed Himself as ONE—there are no other gods
     + This runs contrary to what every other culture believed: they had entire pantheons of gods that were no better than humans, except that they could not die
       - The gods of the pagans were vindictive and emotional, they would use humans as pawns in a game to meet their own ambitious ends
       - They were also not gods: St. Paul makes clear that the “gods” of Egypt, Greece, Rome and every other culture (including many today) were and are in fact demons
         * This is why idolatry is so terrible: it turns people to demons, or, at best, to lesser elements of creation like wood and stone. It rejects God as the One God
       - Important to recognize too: If there were more than one God, as pagans have believed, then no one god would truly be all-powerful—there would be no true God to whom we could turn and who could truly be a loving Father to all. But we know God has shown Himself as the One
   * God, the only and the true, reveals Himself first in creation and then to His people through Moses
     + As One, He shows Himself above all else. Nothing compares to Him for He is all.
       - Since He alone is God, no other thing can compete with Him
       - No evil can overcome Him, no demon contend. He is above all else that is
     + This is why the First Commandment and the *Shema* of Israel (Dt. 6:4-5) are so essential to Jewish and Christian faith
       - These require that we be given over entirely to God Himself, and not to anything less
       - Listen to God’s own understanding of Himself: “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! *For I am God, and there is no other*…. To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. 'Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength.” (cf. Is 45:22-24; cf. Phil 2:10-11)
   * The thing for us to strive for, then, is to treat God as the One God of all
     + To worship anything besides Him is idolatry
       - Idolatry can take many forms: thinking there are many gods to whom we owe allegiance, pagan worship, etc.
       - Basically, we can turn anything (demons, power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc) into idols by giving them more than they deserve, by giving them—created things—the place of God
         * God alone is to be worshipped. He deserves our time and heart more than anything else
3. Examine your hearts and lives
   * Is God truly first in your life, or have other things taken His place?
     + Is Mass on Sundays essential to you or something that is easily replaced? What about daily prayer? Is God an afterthought or the One to Whom you turn before, during, and after all things?
   * Remember again: “The LORD our God is one Lord: and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Dt. 6) and “You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only shall you serve” (Lk. 4).
     + If anything is taking the place of God in your life, your life must change. To God be the glory!

**Third Sunday per Annum: The Name of God**

* Introit
  + O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendor, strength and honor in his holy place.
* Collect
  + Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to your good pleasure, that in the **name of your beloved Son** we may abound in good works.
* Communio
  + Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.
* Catechism
  + CCC 203, 205-209: Names of God and their significance

**Reading I**

[Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/nehemiah/8?2)

Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, which consisted of men, women, and those children old enough to understand. Standing at one end of the open place that was before the Water Gate, he read out of the book from daybreak till midday, in the presence of the men, the women, and those children old enough to understand; and all the people listened attentively to the book of the law. Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the occasion. He opened the scroll so that all the people might see it—for he was standing higher up than any of the people—; and, as he opened it, all the people rose. Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people, their hands raised high, answered, “Amen, amen!” Then they bowed down and prostrated themselves before the LORD, their faces to the ground. Ezra read plainly from the book of the law of God, interpreting it so that all could understand what was read. Then Nehemiah, that is, His Excellency, and Ezra the priest-scribe and the Levites who were instructing the people  
said to all the people: “Today is holy to the LORD your God. Do not be sad, and do not weep”—for all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the law. He said further: “Go, eat rich foods and drink sweet drinks, and allot portions to those who had nothing prepared; for today is holy to our LORD. Do not be saddened this day, for rejoicing in the LORD must be your strength!”

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/19?8)

R. (cf John 6:63c) **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**  
The law of the LORD is perfect,  
            refreshing the soul;  
The decree of the LORD is trustworthy,  
            giving wisdom to the simple.  
R. **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**  
The precepts of the LORD are right,  
            rejoicing the heart;  
The command of the LORD is clear,  
            enlightening the eye.  
R. **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**  
The fear of the LORD is pure,  
            enduring forever;  
The ordinances of the LORD are true,  
            all of them just.  
R. **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**  
Let the words of my mouth and the thought of my heart  
            find favor before you,  
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.  
R. **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**

**Reading II**

[1 Cor 12:12-30](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/12?12)

Brothers and sisters: As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, “Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body, “it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, “Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body, “it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you, “nor again the head to the feet, “I do not need you.” Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the church to be, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work mighty deeds? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

**Alleluia**

[Cf. Lk 4:18](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/4?18)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
The Lord sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor,  
and to proclaim liberty to captives.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/4?1)

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received. Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,* *because he has anointed me* *to bring glad tidings to the poor.* *He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives* *and recovery of sight to the blind,* *to let the oppressed go free,* *and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.* Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

**Homily Points**

1. In modern times, names do not mean much
   * They can easily be changed, and do not necessarily reflect the true nature of a thing. Words can easily be emptied of meaning (nominalism)
     + Modern art is a good example: a painting of a red dot can be called “oak tree” even though that makes no sense
   * In the Bible, however, a name is much more important, for it reveals the essence of something:
     + “In the biblical mentality the name contains the most profound reality of the individual, it reveals the person’s secret and destiny. Knowing one’s name therefore means knowing the truth about the other person.” (Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 25 May 2011)
     + E.g. Moses = “drawn from water” which reflects not only how he was saved as a baby, but how God would save His people through Moses leading them through the Red Sea
     + E.g. Raphael = “healing of God” and through this archangel, God healed Tobit’s blindness
     + A name in the bible, therefore, gives us insight into the mission that God has for the person or people. The name makes the person present to those who call upon the name
2. This helps us to understand the importance of the Divine Name, the Name of God Himself
   * Yes, God has a Name and He reveals it to us, thereby “becoming accessible, capable of being known more intimately and addressed personally.” (CCC 203)
   * In fact, there are many names for God that He has revealed over time (CCC 204), so we can take time to reflect on them (CCC 205-207)
     + 205 “**I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob**.” God is the God of the fathers…the faithful and compassionate God who remembers them and his promises…He is the God who, from beyond space and time, can do this and wills to do it, the God who will put his almighty power to work for this plan.
     + 206 “**I Am who I Am**” This divine name is mysterious just as God is mystery. It is at once a name revealed and something like the refusal of a name, and hence it better expresses God as what he is—infinitely above everything that we can understand or say: he is the “hidden God,” his name is ineffable, and he is the God who makes himself close to men.
     + 207 By revealing his name God at the same time reveals his faithfulness which is from everlasting to everlasting, valid for the past (“I am the God of your fathers”), as for the future (“I will be with you”). God, who reveals his name as “I AM,” reveals himself as the God who is always there, present to his people in order to save them.
     + 209 In the reading of Sacred Scripture, the revealed name (YHWH, I AM) is replaced by the divine title “**LORD**” (in Hebrew *Adonai*, in Greek *Kyrios*). It is under this title that the divinity of Jesus will be acclaimed: “Jesus is LORD.” [The Holy Spirit is also called LORD in the Creed.]
     + The full Name of God is: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which shows that God is a communion of persons in love
3. Each of these Divine Names helps us to understand more about Who God is, how He approaches us in love and fidelity, and how we ought to approach Him as well
   * They show that He is always there, desiring for us to come to Him above all else
   * They show that His Name makes Him and His power present in our lives
   * This is why the Second Commandment is so important: we cannot use God’s Name flippantly. “For this reason man must not abuse it. He must keep it in mind in silent, loving adoration. He will not introduce it into his own speech except to bless, praise, and glorify it.” (CCC 2143)
     + It is a Name which requires awe, reverence, honor, respect, for in the presence of God, in the presence of His Name, we see how small we are and how great God is
       - CCC 208: Faced with God's fascinating and mysterious presence, man discovers his own insignificance. Before the burning bush, Moses takes off his sandals and veils his face in the presence of God's holiness. Before the glory of the thrice-holy God, Isaiah cries out: “Woe is me! I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips.” Before the divine signs wrought by Jesus, Peter exclaims: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”
   * Let us speak the Holy Name with love. Blessed be God’s Holy Name!

**Fourth Sunday per Annum: God of Truth and Love**

* Introit
  + Save us, O Lord our God! And gather us from the nations, to give thanks to your holy name, and make it our glory to praise you.
* Collect
  + Grant us, Lord our God, that we may **honor you with all our mind**, and **love** everyone in **truth** of heart.
* Communio
  + Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your merciful love. O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call on you.
* Catechism
  + CCC 214-221: Meaning of Divine Truth and Love

**Reading I**

[Jer 1:4-5, 17-19](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/1?4)

The word of the LORD came to me, saying: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you. But do you gird your loins; stand up and tell them all that I command you. Be not crushed on their account, as though I would leave you crushed before them; for it is I this day who have made you a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of brass, against the whole land: against Judah’s kings and princes, against its priests and people. They will fight against you but not prevail over you, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/71?1)

R. (cf. 15ab) **I will sing of your salvation.**  
In you, O LORD, I take refuge;  
            let me never be put to shame.  
In your justice rescue me, and deliver me;  
            incline your ear to me, and save me.  
R. **I will sing of your salvation.**  
Be my rock of refuge,  
            a stronghold to give me safety,  
            for you are my rock and my fortress.  
O my God, rescue me from the hand of the wicked.  
R. **I will sing of your salvation.**  
For you are my hope, O Lord;  
            my trust, O God, from my youth.  
On you I depend from birth;  
            from my mother’s womb you are my strength.  
R. **I will sing of your salvation.**  
My mouth shall declare your justice,  
            day by day your salvation.  
O God, you have taught me from my youth,  
            and till the present I proclaim your wondrous deeds.  
R. **I will sing of your salvation.**

**1 Cor 12:31—13:13**

[1 Cor 12:31—13:13](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1Corinthians/12?31)

Brothers and sisters: Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in human and angelic tongues, but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, It is not inflated, it is not rude, **it does not seek its own interests**, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but **rejoices with the truth**. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

**Alleluia**

[Lk 4:18](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/4?18)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
The Lord sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor,  
to proclaim liberty to captives.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 4:21-30](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/4?21)

Jesus began speaking in the synagogue, saying: “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, “Isn’t this the son of Joseph?” He said to them, “Surely you will quote me this proverb, ‘Physician, cure yourself,’ and say, ‘Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.’” And he said, “Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.

**Homily Points**

1. Two of the most misunderstood things today: truth and love
   * Truth is seen as useless, or relative: “my truth” “your truth”
     + Yet this ends in contradiction and we end up at odds rather than unified
   * Love is seen as some amorphous, selfish pursuit of pleasure; something that I alone determine for myself
     + Yet this too ends in contradiction and never fulfills what it promises
   * We must look, then, not to worldly misunderstandings, but rather to the God of Truth and Love to know what these truly are and how they affect our lives
2. First thing to remember: God is the basis of all reality. He *is* truth. He *is* love.
   * We must start with God when discussing these things, or we will always end up in the wrong place, drawing the wrong conclusions like the people in the Gospel
   * God is Creator, and what He says of things is what they are
     + This is truth: things as they are created to be by God: “The sum of your word is truth; and every one of your righteous ordinances endures forever.” (Ps. 119)
     + This means that there are some things that are true, and some things that are not
       - Because of sin, some people and some things work against what God has intended them to be
       - This comes from the Fall itself, when Satan, the Father of Lies, convinced us to work against the truth of God’s word, to disbelieve God’s truth
       - We must remain in the truth of God if we are to know who we truly are, who God made us to be (Jn. 17; Gaudium et spes 22)
3. Not only is God Creator, but He is love itself too
   * This means that any definition of love which contradicts what God has said is erroneous—it is a false promise that will lead us nowhere good
   * Rather we can look to God’s own love
     + First, God Himself, a communion of loving Persons Who chose, in “sheer gratuitous love,” to reveal Himself to us (CCC 218)
     + Second, Love Incarnate in the Son, Who humbled Himself to share our humanity and die on the Cross to make God’s love known (Phil. 2)
     + Third, the “more excellent way” that Saint Paul proposes today: this is love lived out in Christian life. It is love that is sacrificial, not selfish. It is the very charity of God poured into our hearts (Rom. 5:5)
       - It is the “the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God” (CCC 1822)
4. Living, speaking truth in love is not easy
   * Yet these are commanded by God through Jesus in the Gospel, especially at the Last Supper (Jn. 13-17)
     + Jesus consecrates His followers in the Truth, in Himself, meaning He sets them aside to live the one, true way
     + He also *commands* that we love one another *as He loved us*: this means there are certain things excluded from this love, certain things this love does not mean
       - This includes when others do not accept divine truth and love, as in the Gospel today
         * We must stay with God first, otherwise we lose all credibility, all standing, and will be carried away by all sorts of strange things
     + Truth and love cannot exist one without the other: without truth there is no love, without love there is no truth: “love rejoices in the truth”
       - *Only in truth does charity shine forth*, only in truth can charity be authentically lived. Truth is the light that gives meaning and value to charity. That light is both the light of reason and the light of faith, through which the intellect attains to the natural and supernatural truth of charity: it grasps its meaning as gift, acceptance, and communion. Without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality. Love becomes an empty shell, to be filled in an arbitrary way. In a culture without truth, this is the fatal risk facing love. It falls prey to contingent subjective emotions and opinions, the word “love” is abused and distorted, to the point where it comes to mean the opposite. Truth frees charity from the constraints of an emotionalism that deprives it of relational and social content, and of a fideism that deprives it of human and universal breathing-space. In the truth, charity reflects the personal yet public dimension of faith in the God of the Bible, who is both *Agápe* and *Lógos*: Charity and Truth, Love and Word. (Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in veritate 3)
   * This is why the Church prays for these things often: we are easily led astray and need to ask constantly that “we may honor you God all our mind, and love everyone in truth of heart” (Collect)
   * We cannot do this alone. Therefore let us pray with and for one another, that we stand for the truth, live in true love, and thereby become channels of God’s transforming grace in this world which so needs the God of Truth and Love

**Fifth Sunday per Annum: Believing in One God**

* Introit
  + O come, **let us worship God** and bow low before the God who made us, for he is the Lord our God.
* Collect
  + Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, **relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace**, they may be defended always by your protection.
* Communio
  + Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, his wonders for the children of men, for he satisfies the thirsty soul, and the hungry he fills with good things.
* Catechism
  + CCC 222-227: Implications of monotheistic faith
  + CCC 2095-2100: Serving God alone through adoration, prayer, sacrifice
  + CCC 2144: Sense of the Sacred

**Reading I**

[Is 6:1-2a, 3-8](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/6?1)

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above. They cried one to the other, “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!” At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke. Then I said, “Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember that he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with it, and said, “See, now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged.” Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send?  Who will go for us?” “Here I am,” I said; “send me!”

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 138:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 7-8](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/138?1)

R. (1c) **In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.**  
I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart,  
            for you have heard the words of my mouth;  
in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;  
            I will worship at your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name.  
R. **In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.**  
Because of your kindness and your truth;  
            for you have made great above all things  
            your name and your promise.  
When I called, you answered me;  
            you built up strength within me.  
R. **In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.**  
All the kings of the earth shall give thanks to you, O LORD,  
            when they hear the words of your mouth;  
and they shall sing of the ways of the LORD:  
            “Great is the glory of the LORD.”  
R. **In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.**  
Your right hand saves me.  
            The LORD will complete what he has done for me;  
your kindness, O LORD, endures forever;  
            forsake not the work of your hands.  
R. **In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.**

**Reading II**

[1 Cor 15:1-11](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/15?1)

I am reminding you, brothers and sisters, of the gospel I preached to you, which you indeed received and in which you also stand. Through it you are also being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. After that, Christ appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born abnormally, he appeared to me. For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective. Indeed, I have toiled harder than all of them; not I, however, but the grace of God that is with me. Therefore, whether it be I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

**Alleluia**

[Mt 4:19](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/mark/4?19)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
Come after me  
and I will make you fishers of men.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 5:1-11](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/5?1)

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.” When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

**Homily Points**

1. For a few weeks we have been considering our faith in One God. Today we will see what the implications of that are for our daily lives. There are five main ones.
   * First, as we have said many times, it means putting God first in all that we do
     + This happens in three ways (CCC 2095-2100):
       - **Adoration**: To adore God is to acknowledge him as God, as the Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of everything that exists, as infinite and merciful Love. […] To adore God is to acknowledge, in respect and absolute submission, the “nothingness of the creature” who would not exist but for God. To adore God is to praise and exalt him and to humble oneself, as Mary did in the Magnificat, confessing with gratitude that he has done great things and holy is his name.The worship of the one God sets man free from turning in on himself, from the slavery of sin and the idolatry of the world.
       - **Prayer**: conversation with God about everything in our lives. Lifting up the mind toward God is an expression of our adoration of God: prayer of praise and thanksgiving, intercession and petition. Prayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God's commandments.
       - **Sacrifice**: It is right to offer sacrifice to God as a sign of adoration and gratitude, supplication and communion: “Every action done so as to cling to God in communion of holiness, and thus achieve blessedness, is a true sacrifice.” (St. Augustine). Outward sacrifice, to be genuine, must be the expression of spiritual sacrifice.
   * Second it means we must thank Him for everything in our lives, even the Crosses, for “Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights” (Jm. 1)
     + If God is the only One, everything we are and have comes from him (CCC 224)
     + “Trust the past to God's mercy, the present to God's love, and the future to God's providence.” (St. Augustine)
     + “Thank God ahead of time” for the blessings He hasn’t given yet. (Bl. Solanus Casey)
   * Third, it means treating others in truth and love, recognizing them as made in God’s image and likeness
     + This is why Jesus tells us to love even our enemies: they are God’s too
   * Fourth, it means having a good relationship with created things, from nature to technology
     + All of creation is meant to help us get to God, but if we allow it to take us from Him, it has become an idol
     + This is why saints ask God for a holy detachment from all created things: so that they can be wholly attendant to God
   * This leads to the fifth implication: complete trust in God
     + Because of Who God is and what He does, we can place all our trust in Him in every circumstance of life: good or bad, joy or sorrow, suffering or flourishing
     + St. Teresa of Avila’s prayer comes readily to mind: “Let nothing trouble you / Let nothing frighten you Everything passes / God never changes Patience / Obtains all Whoever has God / Wants for nothing God alone is enough.”
2. Surely one of these implications struck to your heart.
   * Maybe it is hard to love enemies, or to thank God for the challenges you are facing. Perhaps your phone is getting in the way of your relationship with God. Perhaps “trust in God” are some of the most uncomfortable words I could utter to you.
   * Perhaps like Isaiah and Peter in the readings today, you feel your sins prevent any of this from taking place
     + Fear not! Both Isaiah and Peter became great saints, for they abandoned themselves to God. They had faith in the one God and His grace overcame their shortcomings and sins
     + The Church prays today that we do not rely on ourselves, but “solely on the hope of heavenly grace” (Collect)
       - This is a prayer God wants to answer. We can trust He will
   * Therefore: pray about what struck your heart today. Give that fear and worry to God. Ask Him to help you take the next step, and make a concrete plan to do so
     + If your phone is interrupting your prayer time, put it in a different room when you pray
     + If trust in God is an issue, consider praying the Litany of Trust or St. Teresa’s prayer regularly
     + If you are struggling to forgive and love an enemy, remember that God has forgiven you, and ask for the grace to forgive them the next time you see or think about them
     + If you struggle to be thankful, make a list of every blessing in your life, even the small things, and you will see how much God is at work in your life
     + Whatever the case: ask for the grace and take steps to live it out. We cannot grow if we stay in the cages we make for ourselves.
       - But God has opened the cage and wants us to roam free. Our faith in Him makes that possible. “O come, let us worship God and bow low before the God who made us, for he is the Lord our God.” (Introit)

**Sixth Sunday per Annum: Divine Attribute: Almighty**

* Introit
  + **Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold!** Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.
* Collect
  + O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.
* Communio
  + They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.
* Catechism
  + CCC 268-271: God can do all things

**Reading I**

[Jer 17:5-8](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/17?5)

Thus says the LORD: **Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh**, whose heart turns away from the LORD. He is like a barren bush in the desert that enjoys no change of season, but stands in a lava waste, a salt and empty earth. **Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD**, whose hope is the LORD. He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream: it fears not the heat when it comes; its leaves stay green; in the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/1?1)

R (40:5a) **Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.**  
Blessed the man who follows not  
            the counsel of the wicked,  
nor walks in the way of sinners,  
            nor sits in the company of the insolent,  
but delights in the law of the LORD  
            and meditates on his law day and night.  
R **Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.**  
He is like a tree  
            planted near running water,  
that yields its fruit in due season,  
            and whose leaves never fade.  
Whatever he does, prospers.  
R **Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.**  
Not so the wicked, not so;  
            they are like chaff which the wind drives away.  
For the LORD watches over the way of the just,  
            but the way of the wicked vanishes.  
R **Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.**

**Reading II**

[1 Cor 15:12, 16-20](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/15?12)

Brothers and sisters: If Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all. But now **Christ has been raised from the dead**, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

**Alleluia**

[Lk 6:23ab](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/6?23)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
Rejoice and be glad;  
your reward will be great in heaven.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 6:17, 20-26](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/6?17)

Jesus came down with the twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.”

**Homily Points**

1. Have you noticed that, of all the qualities God possesses (eternal, omnipresent, etc.), the only one the Creed mentions is “Almighty”?
   * This must be of particular import if this is what the Creed chooses to emphasize
   * Almighty means “His might is universal, for God who created everything also rules everything and can do everything” (CCC 268)
     + What is more, this power of God is not arbitrary, much less vicious, as it so easily is among worldly rulers. “God's power is loving, for he is our Father” (CCC 268)
     + Beyond this, there is something hidden about His power, something that works in ways we cannot understand. It is “mysterious, for only faith can discern it when it ‘is made perfect in weakness.’” (CCC 268; Is. 55)
2. It is God’s omnipotence which allows us to trust in Him to the degree that we should, i.e. total surrender and abandonment
   * For it is by His omnipotence that He shows His care for us: “God is the Father Almighty, whose fatherhood and power shed light on one another: God reveals his fatherly omnipotence by the way he takes care of our needs; by the filial adoption that he gives us; finally by his infinite mercy, for he displays his power at its height by freely forgiving sins.” (CCC 270)
   * This is why this attribute is stressed in the Creed rather than His eternity or omnipresence.
     + For us finite and temporal creatures, those don’t make much difference: to us who live only a few short years, things like the sun and moon seem eternal; things like air seem omnipresent, yet we do not give our allegiance to them
     + Something almighty, however, is worth notice, worth our attention, and, in this case, worth our trust
       - Why else would superhero and fantasy movies have such appeal these days? There are these great beings that save and help mere mortals like us, that give us hope in our struggles
       - Well, we need not look to Superman, but to God
         * All through the Bible, and twice today in Jeremiah and the Psalm, there is the admonition to trust in God and not flesh—for God is the almighty, the real, the true. Everything else will falter at some point, but God will always be there
3. The Introit today says: “Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold!”
   * This is meant to be our “attitude” before God the Almighty
     + He is not some distant god, but *our* God, *Our Father*, as we pray so often
     + He is close to us, He has power to save and to help. Nothing is impossible for God
       - Even has power to overcome our most ancient enemy: death (2nd Reading)
         * If He can conquer the worst thing, He can conquer the rest as well, even when it seems insurmountable
     + For this reason, we can turn to Him and cry out “Be my protector, be my stronghold!”
       - After these last two years, this is all the more comforting. “For you are my rock, my stronghold, O Mighty God!”

**Seventh Sunday per Annum: When God Seems Absent (Evil and Suffering)**

* Introit
  + **O Lord, I trust in your merciful love**. My heart will rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me.
* Collect
  + Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, **always pondering spiritual things**, we may carry out in both word and deed that which is pleasing to you.
* Communio
  + **I will recount all your wonders**, I will rejoice in you and be glad, and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.
* Catechism
  + CCC 272-274: The mystery of God’s apparent powerlessness

**Reading I**

[1 Sm 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1samuel/26?2)

In those days, Saul went down to the desert of Ziph with three thousand picked men of Israel, to search for David in the desert of Ziph. So David and Abishai went among Saul’s soldiers by night and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade, with his spear thrust into the ground at his head and Abner and his men sleeping around him. Abishai whispered to David: “God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day. Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I will not need a second thrust!” But David said to Abishai, “Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the LORD’s anointed and remain unpunished?” So David took the spear and the water jug from their place at Saul’s head, and they got away without anyone’s seeing or knowing or awakening. All remained asleep, because the LORD had put them into a deep slumber. Going across to an opposite slope, David stood on a remote hilltop at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner, and the troops. He said: “Here is the king’s spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. **The LORD will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness**. Today, though the LORD delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the LORD’s anointed.”

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/103?1)

R (8a) **The Lord is kind and merciful.**  
Bless the LORD, O my soul;  
            and all my being, bless his holy name.  
Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
            and forget not all his benefits.  
R **The Lord is kind and merciful.**  
He pardons all your iniquities,  
            heals all your ills.  
He redeems your life from destruction,  
            crowns you with kindness and compassion.  
R **The Lord is kind and merciful.**  
Merciful and gracious is the LORD,  
            slow to anger and abounding in kindness.  
Not according to our sins does he deal with us,  
            nor does he requite us according to our crimes.  
R **The Lord is kind and merciful.**  
As far as the east is from the west,  
            so far has he put our transgressions from us.  
As a father has compassion on his children,  
            so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.  
R **The Lord is kind and merciful.**

**Reading II**

[1 Cor 15:45-49](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/15?45)

Brothers and sisters: It is written, *The first man, Adam, became a living being,*  the last Adam a life-giving spirit. But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven. As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.

**Alleluia**

[Jn 13:34](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/john/13?34)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
I give you a new commandment, says the Lord:  
love one another as I have loved you.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 6:27-38](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/6?27)

Jesus said to his disciples: “To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

**Homily Points**

1. Last week we considered God’s Almighty power
   * There is one thing that always makes us doubt this: it is the most ancient struggle of mankind besides sin itself
     + It is suffering and pain, especially in those we love and in good people
     + From Cain and Abel to the book of Job, to the sufferings of the martyrs in the face of the world, the problem of suffering has brought up the deepest questions, especially: “why do the wicked prosper while the good struggle and suffer?” (E.g. Psalm 73)
2. God never really answers this question in the Bible (at least in a straightforward way), but He does a couple other things
   * First, He shows that He is with us in that, that our pain isn’t meaningless or empty. We see that on the Cross, where His own suffering brought us salvation
     + This is why we must “always ponder spiritual things” (Collect), so that we can peer deeper into the reality of things, rather than only focus on our pain—we can see further into God’s hidden plans, and know that our suffering is not without purpose
       - “Knowledge comes from a book, penetration of a mystery through suffering” (Ven. Fulton Sheen)
   * Second, He shows that that’s an indicator we are on the right path—Jesus stayed on the Cross rather than coming down. He asks us to carry ours with Him.
     + It would be so much easier to follow the way of the evil ways of this world, but I fear for those who follow that broad path to destruction. As the saying goes, “only a living body can swim against the current.”
       - The rest float to destruction, while the good fight the good fight. This life is not only suffering of course, but when we have it, it is united to Him, and therefore grace-filled: it keeps us reliant on Him, and on the narrow path.
     + Hence prayers like the Introit and Communio: “O Lord, I trust in your merciful love.” “I will recount all your wonders”
       - Only an Almighty God can bring us through, so it is good to see all the ways He has already done so, for this keeps us trusting Him daily.
       - “As a response to a word which preceded it, [faith] would always be an act of remembrance. Yet this remembrance is not fixed on past events but, as the memory of a promise, it becomes capable of opening up the future, shedding light on the path to be taken. We see how faith, as remembrance of the future, *memoria futuri*, is thus closely bound up with hope.” (Lumen fidei, 9)
3. Nonetheless, suffering brings up questions, concerns, doubts even. “How could a good God, a supposedly good Church, allow this, even seemingly impose it at times?”
   * While the specifics we will only know in Heaven, where the fullness of God’s plan will be revealed, we can say that at least it is because He wants us to love Him above all, in all situations.
     + Occasions of suffering are God asking “Do you trust me?”
   * You might wonder, with all that is happening in the world and even in the Church right now, what is the point?
     + Yet those are the times when great saints are made, for they fight the fight, run the race, and receive the crown. When Jacob wrestled with God, he received His blessing at the end.
   * Suffering is never easy, but thank God it is at least not pointless when we are there with Jesus.

**Eighth Sunday per Annum: Preparation for Lent (The Father Sends the Son)**

* Introit
  + The Lord became my protector. He brought me out to a place of freedom; he saved me because he delighted in me.
* Collect
  + Grant us, O Lord, we pray, that the course of our world may be directed by your peaceful rule and that your Church may rejoice, **untroubled in her devotion**.
* Communio
  + I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me, sing psalms to the name of the Lord Most High.
* Catechism
  + CCC 540, 1438: Christian meaning of Lent

**Reading I**

[Sir 27:4-7](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/sirach/27?4)

When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear; so do one’s faults when one speaks. As the test of what the potter molds is in the furnace, so in tribulation is the test of the just. The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; so too does one’s speech disclose the bent of one’s mind. Praise no one before he speaks, for it is then that people are tested.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/92?2)

R (cf. 2a) **Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**  
It is good to give thanks to the LORD,  
            to sing praise to your name, Most High,  
To proclaim your kindness at dawn  
            and your faithfulness throughout the night.  
R **Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**  
The just one shall flourish like the palm tree,  
            like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow.  
They that are planted in the house of the LORD  
            shall flourish in the courts of our God.  
R **Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**  
They shall bear fruit even in old age;  
            vigorous and sturdy shall they be,  
Declaring how just is the LORD,  
            my rock, in whom there is no wrong.  
R **Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**

**Reading II**

[1 Cor 15:54-58](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/15?54)

Brothers and sisters: When this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: *Death is swallowed up in victory.* *Where, O death, is your victory?* *Where, O death, is your sting?* The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

**Alleluia**

[Phil 2:15d, 16a](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/philippians/2?15)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
Shine like lights in the world  
as you hold on to the word of life.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 6:39-45](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/6?39)

Jesus told his disciples a parable, “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but **when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher**. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,’ when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite!  **Remove the wooden beam from your eye first**; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye. A **good tree does not bear rotten fruit**, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.”

**Homily Points**

1. For seven weeks we have contemplated the mystery of God the Almighty, yet also the loving Father
   * We have seen His care for us even in suffering, and have looked intently at Who He is
   * As we now prepare for Lent, we must continue that gaze, for something new is about to happen: the Father sends the Son anew this Lent and Easter
     + Of course, Christ came at a certain time and in a certain place, but because of the great work that happens in the Sacred Liturgy, those realities are made present to us each year
     + This Lent, the Father sends His Son again to us, to be with us, to teach us, to save us. “The Lord became my protector. He brought me out to a place of freedom; he saved me because he delighted in me.” (Introit)
2. The Gospel today helps us to prepare to enter into this penitential season
   * Jesus speaks about disciples “training” to be like the teacher
     + This is exactly the purpose of Lent: we are training to be like Jesus. We will not become superior to Him, but will be like Him
     + As He was 40 days in the desert, so too we will be 40 days in the desert of Lent
     + As He underwent asceticism (the Greek word for “training”), so too we enter into an intense period of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving so as to be like Him Who conquered sin
       1. Yes, this season is meant to help us overcome all our sin too, *all* of them: pride, lust, gluttony, envy, jealousy, anger, sloth
   * We seek in this time to “remove the wooden beams” in our lives so that we can see more clearly; to become “good trees that bear good fruit.”
     + Whether it be God at work in our prayer and in our lives, or His presence in the world around us, we hope to see more clearly through faith, so that, in faith, we can respond to Him more fully and obediently
     + The penance of this season is meant to prune away the bad fruit and make it so the good branches of virtue can flourish: faith, hope, love, prudence, courage, temperance, justice
3. As we considered last week, no suffering is without purpose if done for and with Jesus
   * This is why, every year, the Church *intentionally and purposefully* takes on penitential suffering—each member in his own way—so that we can begin to experience even now the promises of Easter and heaven
     + Think of the 2nd Reading: death no longer has power over us because of what Christ did on the Cross
       1. Every Lent, every day even, we go through small “deaths” so that we can, like St. Paul, mock the “big death”! We can prepare even now for the Resurrection and immortality
4. Carefully take time to pick your Lenten penances then
   * They are not meant simply to be annoyances, but ways in which you are united to the Son, Who leads us to the Almighty Father
     + Take more time each day for prayer: perhaps a rosary, Scripture reading, spiritual reading, Stations
     + Pick at least day each week (Fridays are good) to fast (if your health allows of course)
     + Choose some way to give alms, either to the Church, the poor, or some charity that helps those in need
   * These methods of penance have been there since Jesus Himself was in the desert, and by doing them ourselves, we become “fully trained disciples,” ready, when Easter comes, to go out like the apostles to spread the Good News
     + Do not let this time go to waste. The Father sends us His Son! Let us go out to meet Him.

1. “[The homily] should be an explanation of some aspect of the readings from Sacred Scripture or of another text from the Ordinary or the Proper of the Mass….” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)