

SAINT ANDREW THE APOSTLE *November 30*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (10:8b-18)

But what does it say? “The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 19:1-6

The heavens declare the glory of God.

- 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, *
and the firmament shows his handiwork.
- 2 One day tells its tale to another, *
and one night imparts knowledge to another.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

- 3 Although they have no words or language, *
and their voices are not heard,
4 Their sound has gone out into all lands, *
and their message to the ends of the world.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

- 5 In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; *
it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.
6 It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens
and runs about to the end of it again; *
nothing is hidden from its burning heat.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew (4:18-22)*

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Most biographical notes on this Apostle begin “Andrew was Simon Peter’s brother,” and he is so described in the Gospels. Identifying Andrew as Peter’s brother makes it easy to know who he is, but it also makes it easy to overlook the fact of Andrew’s special gift to the company of Christ. The Gospel according to John tells how Andrew, a disciple of John the Baptist, was one of two disciples who followed Jesus after John had pointed him out, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:29). Andrew and the other disciple went with Jesus and stayed with him, and Andrew’s first act afterward was to find his brother and bring him to Jesus. We might call Andrew the first missionary in the company of disciples.

Though Andrew was not a part of the inner circle of disciples (Peter, James, and John), he is always named in the list of disciples, and appears prominently in several incidents. Andrew and Peter were fishermen, and Matthew’s Gospel records Jesus’ calling them from their occupation, and their immediate response to his call. Andrew was the disciple who brought the boy with the loaves and fishes to Jesus for the feeding of the multitude.

We hear little of Andrew as a prominent leader, and he seems always to be in the shadow of Peter. Eusebius, the Church historian, records his going to Scythia, but there is no reliable information about the end of his life. Tradition has it that he was fastened to an X-shaped cross and suffered death at the hands of angry pagans.

Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland.

St. John of Damascus *December 4*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (15:12-20)

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 29

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

- 1 Ascribe to the LORD, you gods, *
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his Name; *
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

- 3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters;
the God of glory thunders; *
the LORD is upon the mighty waters.
- 4 The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice; *
the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

- 5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees; *
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;
6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, *
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

- 7 The voice of the LORD splits the flames of fire;
the voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; *
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
8 The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe *
and strips the forests bare.
9 And in the temple of the LORD *
all are crying, "Glory!"

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

- 10 The LORD sits enthroned above the flood; *
the LORD sits enthroned as King for evermore.
11 The LORD shall give strength to his people; *
the LORD shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to John (5:24-27)*

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life. Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man."

The Gospel of the Lord

John of Damascus was the son of a Christian tax collector for the Mohammedan Caliph of Damascus. At an early age, he succeeded his father in this office. In about 715, he entered the monastery of St. Sabas near Jerusalem. There he devoted himself to an ascetic life and to the study of the Fathers.

In the same year that John was ordained priest, 726, the Byzantine Emperor Leo the Isaurian published his first edict against the Holy Images, which signaled the formal outbreak of the iconoclastic controversy. The edict forbade the veneration of sacred images, or icons, and ordered their destruction. In 729-730, John wrote three "Apologies (or Treatises) against the Iconoclasts and in Defense of the Holy Images." He argued that such pictures were not idols, for they represented neither false gods nor even the true God in his divine nature; but only saints, or our Lord as man. He further distinguished between the respect, or veneration (*proskynesis*), that is properly paid to created beings, and the worship (*latreia*), that is properly given only to God.

The iconoclast case rested, in part, upon the Monophysite heresy, which held that Christ had only one nature, and since that nature was divine, it would be improper to represent him by material substances such as wood and paint. The Monophysite heresy was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

At issue also was the heresy of Manichaeism, which held that matter itself was essentially evil. In both of these heresies, John maintained, the Lord's incarnation was rejected. The Seventh Ecumenical Council, in 787, decreed that crosses, icons, the book of the Gospels, and other sacred objects were to receive reverence or veneration, expressed by salutations, incense, and lights, because the honor paid to them passed on to that which they represented. True worship (*latreia*), however, was due to God alone.

John also wrote a great synthesis of theology, *The Fount of Knowledge*, of which the last part, "On the Orthodox Faith," is best known. To Anglicans, John is best known as the author of the Easter hymns, "Thou hallowed chosen morn of praise," "Come, ye faithful, raise the strain," and "The day of resurrection."

St. Clement of Alexandria *December 5*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Colossians (1:11-20)

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 34:9-14

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 9 Fear the LORD, you that are his saints, *
 for those who fear him lack nothing.
10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger, *
 but those who seek the LORD lack nothing that is good.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 11 Come, children, and listen to me; *
 I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
12 Who among you loves life *
 and desires long life to enjoy prosperity?

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 13 Keep your tongue from evil-speaking *
and your lips from lying words.
- 14 Turn from evil and do good; *
seek peace and pursue it.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to John (6:57-63)*

Jesus said, "Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever." He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."

The Gospel of the Lord

Clement was born in the middle of the second century. He was a cultured Greek philosopher who sought truth in many schools until he met Pantheons, founder of the Christian Catechetical School at Alexandria in Egypt. Clement succeeded Pantheons as head of that school in about 190, and was for many years an apologist for the Christian faith to both pagans and Christians. His learning and allegorical exegesis of the Bible helped to commend Christianity to the intellectual circles of Alexandria. His work prepared the way for his pupil Origen, the most eminent theologian of early Greek Christianity, and his liberal approach to secular knowledge laid the foundations of Christian humanism. During the persecution under the Emperor Severus in 202, he fled Alexandria. The exact time and place of his death are unknown.

Clement lived in the age of “Gnosticism,” a comprehensive term for many theories or ways of salvation current in the second and third centuries, all emphasizing “Gnosis” or “knowledge.” Salvation, for Gnostics, was to be had through a secret and rather esoteric knowledge accessible only to a few. It was salvation from the world, rather than salvation of the world. Clement asserted that there was a true Christian Gnosis, to be found in the Scriptures, available to all.

Although his understanding of this Christian knowledge—ultimately knowledge of Christ—incorporated several notions of Greek philosophy which the Gnostics also held, Clement dissented from the negative Gnostic view of the world and its denial of the role of free will.

What Rich Man Will Be Saved? was the title of a treatise by Clement on Mark 10:17–31, and the Lord’s words, “Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.” His interpretation sanctioned the “right use” of material goods and wealth. It has been contrasted to the interpretation of Athanasius in his Life of Antony, which emphasized strict renunciation. Both interpretations can be found in early Christian spirituality: Clement’s, called “liberal,” and that of Athanasius, “literal.”

Among Clement’s writings are the hymns, “Sunset to sunrise changes now” and “Master of eager youth.”

St. Nicholas of Myra *December 6*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (4:7-14)

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 145:8-13

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

- 8 The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, *
 slow to anger and of great kindness.
- 9 The LORD is loving to everyone *
 and his compassion is over all his works.

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

- 10 All your works praise you, O LORD, *
 and your faithful servants bless you.
- 11 They make known the glory of your kingdom *
 and speak of your power;

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

- 12 That the peoples may know of your power *
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
- 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; *
your dominion endures throughout all ages.

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Mark (10:13-16)*

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to 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. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

The Gospel of the Lord

Very little is known about the life of Nicholas, except that he suffered torture and imprisonment during the persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. It is possible that he was one of the bishops attending the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325. He was honored as a saint in Constantinople in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian. His veneration became immensely popular in the West after the supposed removal of his body to Bari, Italy, in the late eleventh century. In England almost 400 churches were dedicated to him.

Nicholas is famed as the traditional patron of seafarers and sailors, and, more especially, of children. As a bearer of gifts to children, his name was brought to America by the Dutch colonists in New York, from whom he is popularly known as Santa Claus.

St. Ambrose of Milan *December 7*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (4:23-31)

After they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard it, they raised their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant: ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.’ For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 27:5-11

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

- 5 One thing have I asked of the LORD;
one thing I seek; *
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days
of my life;
- 6 To behold the fair beauty of the LORD *
and to seek him in his temple.

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

- 7 For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe
in his shelter; *
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling
and set me high upon a rock.
- 8 Even now he lifts up my head *
above my enemies round about me.

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

- 9 Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation
with sounds of great gladness; *
I will sing and make music to the LORD.
- 10 Hearken to my voice, O LORD, when I call; *
have mercy on me and answer me.
- 11 You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." *
Your face, LORD, will I seek.

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Luke (12:35-37,42-44)*

Jesus said, "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions."

The Gospel of the Lord

Ambrose was the son of a Roman governor in Gaul, and in 373 he himself was governor in Upper Italy. Though brought up in a Christian family, Ambrose had not been baptized. He became involved in the election of a Bishop of Milan only as mediator between the battling factions of Arians and orthodox Christians. The election was important, because the victorious party would control the powerful see of Milan.

Ambrose exhorted the nearly riotous mob to keep the peace and to obey the law. Suddenly both sides raised the cry, "Ambrose shall be our bishop!" He protested, but the people persisted. Hastily baptized, he was ordained bishop on December 7, 373.

Ambrose rapidly won renown as a defender of orthodoxy against Arianism and as a statesman of the Church. He was also a skillful hymnodist. He introduced antiphonal chanting to enrich the liturgy, and wrote straightforward, practical discourses to educate his people in such matters of doctrine as Baptism, the Trinity, the Eucharist, and the Person of Christ. His persuasive preaching was an important factor in the conversion of Augustine of Hippo.

Ambrose did not fear to rebuke emperors, including the hot-headed Theodosius, whom he forced to do public penance for the slaughter of several thousand citizens of Salonika.

About Baptism, Ambrose wrote: "After the font (of baptism), the Holy Spirit is poured on you, 'the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, and the spirit of holy fear'" (De Sacramentis 3.8).

A meditation attributed to him includes these words: "Lord Jesus Christ, you are for me medicine when I am sick; you are my strength when I need help; you are life itself when I fear death; you are the way when I long for heaven; you are light when all is dark; you are my food when I need nourishment." Among hymns attributed to Ambrose are "The eternal gifts of Christ the King," "O Splendor of God's glory bright," and a series of hymns for the Little Hours.

CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY *December 8*

A Reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians (1:3-6,11-12)

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. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 98:1-4

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song, *
for he has done marvelous things.
- 2 With his right hand and his holy arm *
has he won for himself the victory.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 3 The LORD has made known his victory; *
his righteousness has he openly shown in
the sight of the nations.
- 4 He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to
the house of Israel, *
and all the ends of the earth have seen the
victory of our God.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

✠ *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 engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord

The Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, originated in the East perhaps as early as the 5th century in Syria, and was widely celebrated in the East by the 7th century on December 9 as the Feast of the Conception by Saint Anne of the Most Holy Theotokos (or Mother of God). The Eastern Church upheld that Mary was filled with every grace of the Holy Spirit and was all-holy and spotless, but did not precisely what this meant.

When the feast was adopted in the West from the 8th century, it came to be celebrated on December 8. During the medieval period after the Great Schism of the East and West, Mary's nature as "immaculate" was eventually defined more precisely as Mary's preservation from original sin before her birth.

In 1483 Pope Sixtus IV threatened with excommunication those who opposed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Council of Trent upheld the doctrine. And in 1854 Pope Pius IX officially declared the Immaculate Conception as dogma of the Roman Catholic Church.

St. Lucia *December 13*

A Reading from the Book of Revelation (19:5-8)

And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, and all who fear him, small and great.” Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 131

Wait upon the Lord, O my soul.

- 1 O LORD, I am not proud; *
I have no haughty looks.
- 2 I do not occupy myself with great matters, *
or with things that are too hard for me.

Wait upon the Lord, O my soul.

- 3 But I still my soul and make it quiet,
like a child upon its mother’s breast; *
my soul is quieted within me.
- 4 O Israel, wait upon the LORD, *
from this time forth for evermore.

Wait upon the Lord, O my soul.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to John (1:9-13)*

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.

The Gospel of the Lord

Lucy, or Lucia, was martyred at Syracuse, in Sicily, during Diocletian's reign of terror of 303-304, among the most dramatic of the persecutions of early Christians. Her tomb can still be found in the catacombs at Syracuse. She was venerated soon after her death and her cult spread quickly throughout the church. She is among the saints and martyrs named in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

Most of the details of Lucy's life are obscure. In the tradition she is remembered for the purity of her life and the gentleness of her spirit. Because her name means "light," she is sometimes thought of as the patron saint of those who suffer from diseases of the eyes.

In popular piety, Lucy is perhaps most revered because her feast day, December 13, was for many centuries the shortest day of the year. (The reform of the calendar by Pope Gregory VIII (1582) would shift the shortest day to December 21/22, depending upon the year.) It was on Lucy's day that the light began gradually to return and the days to lengthen. This was particularly powerful in northern Europe where the days of winter were quite short. In Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden, Lucy's day has long been a festival of light that is kept as both an ecclesiastical commemoration and a domestic observance.

In the domestic celebration of Lucia-fest, a young girl in the family dresses in pure white (a symbol of Lucy's faith, purity, and martyrdom) and wears a crown of lighted candles upon her head (a sign that on Lucy's day the light is returning) and serves her family special foods prepared especially for the day. In praise of her service, the young girl is called Lucy for the day.

St. John of the Cross *December 14*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Colossians (4:2-6)

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should.

Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 121

My help comes from the Lord.

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills; *
from where is my help to come?
- 2 My help comes from the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

My help comes from the Lord.

- 3 He will not let your foot be moved *
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.
- 4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel *
shall neither slumber nor sleep;

My help comes from the Lord.

- 5 The LORD himself watches over you; *
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,
- 6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *
nor the moon by night.

My help comes from the Lord.

- 7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; *
it is he who shall keep you safe.
- 8 The LORD shall watch over your going out and
your coming in, *
from this time forth for evermore.

My help comes from the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to John (16:12-15,25-28)*

Jesus said, "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. "I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father. On that day you will ask in my name. I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father."

The Gospel of the Lord

John of the Cross was unknown outside the Discalced Carmelites for nearly three hundred years after his death. More recently, scholars of Christian spirituality have found in him a hidden treasure. Once described by Thomas Merton as “the church’s safest mystical theologian,” John has been called the “the poet’s poet,” “spirit of flame,” “celestial and divine.”

John was born in 1542 at Fontiveros, near Avila, Spain. After his third birthday, his father died leaving his mother and her children reduced to poverty. John received elementary education in an orphanage in Medina del Campo. By the age of seventeen he had learned carpentry, tailoring, sculpturing, and painting through apprenticeships to local craftsmen.

After university studies with the Jesuits, John entered the Carmelite Order in Medina del Campo and completed his theological studies in Salamanca. In 1567 he was ordained to the priesthood and recruited by Teresa of Avila for the reformation of the Carmelite Order. By the age of thirty-five he had studied extensively, had been spiritual director to many, and yet devoted himself to the search for God so fully that he reached the peak of the mystical experience: a complete transformation in God.

John became disillusioned with what he considered the laxity of the Carmelites and in 1568 he opened a monastery of “Discalced” (strict observance) Carmelites, an act that met with sharp resistance from the General Chapter of the Calced Carmelites. John was seized, taken to Toledo, and imprisoned in the monastery. During nine months of great hardship, he comforted himself by writing poetry. It was while he was imprisoned that he composed the greater part of his luminous masterpiece, *The Spiritual Canticle*, as well as a number of shorter poems. Other major works are, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *The Living Flame of Love* and *The Dark Night*. It is this latter work, *Noche obscura del alma*, that gave the English language the phrase *dark night of the soul*. After a severe illness, John died on December 14, 1591, in Ubeda, in southern Spain.

A Reading from the second Book of Chronicles (6:12,13b-15,18-20)

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands. Then he knelt on his knees in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven. He said, “O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant in steadfast love with your servants who walk before you with all their heart—you who have kept for your servant, my father David, what you promised to him. Indeed, you promised with your mouth and this day have fulfilled with your hand. But will God indeed reside with mortals on earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built! Regard your servant’s prayer and his plea, O Lord my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you. May your eyes be open day and night toward this house, the place where you promised to set your name, and may you heed the prayer that your servant prays toward this place.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 118:19-29

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; *
I will enter them;
I will offer thanks to the LORD.

20 “This is the gate of the LORD; *
he who is righteous may enter.”

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

21 I will give thanks to you, for you answered me *
and have become my salvation.
22 The same stone which the builders rejected *
has become the chief cornerstone.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

23 This is the LORD's doing, *
and it is marvelous in our eyes.

24 On this day the LORD has acted; *
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

25 Hosannah, LORD, hosannah! *
LORD, send us now success.

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; *
we bless you from the house of the LORD.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

27 God is the LORD; he has shined upon us; *
form a procession with branches up to the horns of the altar.

28 "You are my God, and I will thank you; *
you are my God, and I will exalt you."

29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; *
his mercy endures for ever.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew (7:24-29)*

Jesus said, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!" Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

The Gospel of the Lord

Ralph Adams Cram and Richard Upjohn were major architects whose influence on the design and decoration of Episcopal churches in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is without equal.

Cram was born on this day in 1863 in New Hampshire. After an apprenticeship in Boston, Cram established his own firm in 1890 that specialized in designing churches. Heavily influenced by Anglo-Catholic principles, Cram was a leading proponent for an “American gothic revival”—buildings that were reminiscent of the ritual and structural dominance of the medieval period. Because of his many commissions for chapels and other buildings on college and university campuses, Cram is also remembered as the originator of the “collegiate gothic” style. Among his works is the great gothic nave of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City.

Richard Upjohn was born in England in 1802 where he trained as a cabinetmaker. He immigrated to the United States in 1829 and eventually took up residence in Boston where he worked as a draftsman, art teacher, and eventually an architect. His first major commission was for a gothic-style building for St. John’s Episcopal Church in Bangor, Maine, a building that was later destroyed by fire. He was commissioned in 1839 to design and supervise the construction of a new building for the Parish of Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York City. It was completed in 1846 and continues as Upjohn’s most well known accomplishment. [Upjohn then built Grace Church in Newark in 1848, while Cram made later renovations.]

Upjohn is also remembered for his sketchbooks of small wood-frame designs for churches in rural towns and villages. These designs were widely copied and adapted. As a result, Upjohn was among the early progenitors of “carpenter gothic.”

John Lafarge was born in 1835 in New York City and was a devout Roman Catholic. As an artist, LaFarge worked in a variety of media but is most often remembered for the murals that decorate Trinity Church, Boston, and the Church of the Ascension, New York City, among others. He also made significant contributions to ecclesiastical decoration in stained glass.

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE *December 21*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (10:35-11:1)

Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet “in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back.” But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 126

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

- 1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, *
 then were we like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
 and our tongue with shouts of joy.
- 3 Then they said among the nations, *
 “The LORD has done great things for them.”

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

- 4 The LORD has done great things for us, *
 and we are glad indeed.
- 5 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, *
 like the watercourses of the Negev.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

- 6 Those who sowed with tears *
 will reap with songs of joy.
- 7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
 will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to John (20:24-29)*

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

The Gospel of the Lord

The Gospel according to John records several incidents in which Thomas appears, and from them we are able to gain some impression of the sort of man he was. When Jesus insisted on going to Judea, to visit his friends at Bethany, Thomas boldly declared, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16). At the Last Supper, he interrupted our Lord's discourse with the question, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" (John 14:5).

And after Christ's resurrection, Thomas would not accept the account of the other apostles and the women, until Jesus appeared before him, showing him his wounds. This drew from him the first explicit acknowledgment of Christ's Godhead, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

Thomas appears to have been a thoughtful if rather literal-minded man, inclined to scepticism; but he was a staunch friend when his loyalty was once given. The expression "Doubting Thomas," which has become established in English usage, is not entirely fair to Thomas. He did not refuse belief: he wanted to believe, but did not dare, without further evidence. Because of his goodwill, Jesus gave him a sign, though Jesus had refused a sign to the Pharisees. His Lord's rebuke was well deserved: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20:29). The sign did not create faith; it merely released the faith which was in Thomas already.

According to an early tradition mentioned by Eusebius and others, Thomas evangelized the Parthians. Syrian Christians of Malabar, India, who call themselves the Mar Thoma Church, cherish a tradition that Thomas brought the Gospel to India. Several apocryphal writings have been attributed to him, the most prominent and interesting being the "Gospel of Thomas."

Thomas' honest questioning and doubt, and Jesus' assuring response to him, have given many modern Christians courage to persist in faith, even when they are still doubting and questioning.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST *December 25*

A Reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah (52:7-10)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 98:1-6

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song, *
for he has done marvelous things.
- 2 With his right hand and his holy arm *
has he won for himself the victory.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 3 The LORD has made known his victory; *
his righteousness has he openly shown in
the sight of the nations.
- 4 He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to
the house of Israel, *
and all the ends of the earth have seen the
victory of our God.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 5 Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands; *
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.
- 6 Sing to the LORD with the harp, *
with the harp and the voice of song.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to John (1:1-14)*

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.

The Gospel of the Lord

That Jesus was born is a fact both of history and revelation. The precise date of his birth, however, is not recorded in the Gospels, which are, after all, not biographies, and show little concern for those biographical details in which more modern Christians are interested.

Such interest began to become prominent in the fourth century, together with the development of liturgical observances of the events of biblical history.

It was in Rome, in 336, that the date, December 25, was settled upon for the celebration of the Nativity. The day, coming as it does at the winter solstice, was already a sacred one, as the festival of the birth of the Unconquerable Sun (*dies natalis Solis Invicti*); but its correspondence with the historical date of Jesus' birth was stoutly maintained by learned, if ingenious, writers. The observance spread rapidly throughout the West; and it is accepted also by most of the Eastern Churches, in which, however, it does not have the prominence it has in the West.

The full title of the feast dates from the 1662 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. Prior to that revision, the day was known only as "Christmas Day." The word "Christmas," which can be traced to the twelfth century, is a contraction of "Christ's Mass."

SAINT STEPHEN, DEACON AND MARTYR *December 26*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (6:8-7:2a,51c-60)

Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us." And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. Then the high priest asked him, "Are these things so?" And Stephen replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it." When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 31:1-3,5

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 1 In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame; *
deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.
- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me,
O LORD, O God of truth.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew (23:34-39)*

Jesus said, "Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

The Gospel of the Lord

Very probably a Hellenistic Jew, Stephen was one of the “seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6:3), who were chosen by the apostles to relieve them of the administrative burden of “serving tables and caring for the widows.” By this appointment to assist the apostles, Stephen, the first named of those the New Testament calls “The Seven,” became the first to do what the Church traditionally considers to be the work and ministry of a deacon.

It is apparent that Stephen’s activities involved more than simply “serving tables,” for the Acts of the Apostles speaks of his preaching and performing many miracles. These activities led him into conflict with some of the Jews, who accused him of blasphemy, and brought him before the Sanhedrin. His powerful sermon before the Council is recorded in the seventh chapter of Acts. His denunciations of the Sanhedrin so enraged its members that, without a trial, they dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death.

Saul, later called Paul, stood by, consenting to Stephen’s death, but Stephen’s example of steadfast faith in Jesus, and of intercession for his persecutors, was to find fruit in the mission and witness of Paul after his conversion. The Christian community in Jerusalem, taking fright at the hostility of the Judean authorities, was scattered; so that for the first time the Gospel of Christ began to spread beyond Jerusalem.

SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST *December 27*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (1:1-9)

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 92:1-4,11-14

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

- 1 It is a good thing to give thanks to the LORD, *
and to sing praises to your Name, O Most High;
- 2 To tell of your loving-kindness early in the morning *
and of your faithfulness in the night season;

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

- 3 On the psaltery, and on the lyre, *
and to the melody of the harp.
- 4 For you have made me glad by your acts, O LORD; *
and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

- 11 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, *
and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.
12 Those who are planted in the house of the LORD *
shall flourish in the courts of our God;

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

- 13 They shall still bear fruit in old age; *
they shall be green and succulent;
14 That they may show how upright the LORD is, *
my Rock, in whom there is no fault.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to John (21:19b-24)*

Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me." Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" So the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true.

The Gospel of the Lord

John, the son of Zebedee, with his brother James, was called from being a fisherman to be a disciple and “fisher of men.” With Peter and James, he became one of the inner group of three disciples whom Jesus chose to be with him at the raising of Jairus’ daughter, at the Transfiguration, and in the garden of Gethsemane.

John and his brother James are recorded in the Gospel as being so hotheaded and impetuous that Jesus nicknamed them “Boanerges,” which means, “sons of thunder.” They also appear ambitious, in that they sought seats of honor at Jesus’ right and left when he should come into his kingdom; yet they were faithful companions, willing, without knowing the cost, to share the cup Jesus was to drink. When the other disciples responded in anger to the audacity of the brothers in asking for this honor, Jesus explained that in his kingdom leadership and rule takes the form of being a servant to all.

If, as is commonly held, John is to be identified with the “disciple whom Jesus loved,” then he clearly enjoyed a very special relationship with his Master, reclining close to Jesus at the Last Supper, receiving the care of his mother at the cross, and being the first to understand the truth of the empty tomb.

The Acts of the Apostles records John’s presence with Peter on several occasions: the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, before the Sanhedrin, in prison, and on the mission to Samaria to lay hands upon the new converts that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

According to tradition, John later went to Asia Minor and settled at Ephesus. Under the Emperor Domitian, he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he experienced the visions recounted in the Book of Revelation. Irenaeus, at the end of the second century, liked to recall how Polycarp, in his old age, had talked about the apostle whom he had known while growing up at Ephesus. It is probable that John died there. He alone of the Twelve is said to have lived to extreme old age and to have been spared a martyr’s death.

THE HOLY INNOCENTS *December 28*

A Reading from the Book of Revelation (21:1-7)

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 as their God; 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. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 124

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

- 1 If the LORD had not been on our side, *
let Israel now say;
- 2 If the LORD had not been on our side, *
when enemies rose up against us;

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

- 3 Then would they have swallowed us up alive *
in their fierce anger toward us;
- 4 Then would the waters have overwhelmed us *
and the torrent gone over us;

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

5 Then would the raging waters *
have gone right over us.

6 Blessed be the LORD! *

he has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

7 We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; *
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

8 Our help is in the Name of the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew (2:13-18)*

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Herod the Great, ruler of the Jews, appointed by the Romans in 40 B.C., kept the peace in Palestine for 37 years. His ruthless control, coupled with genuine ability, has been recorded by the Jewish historian Josephus, who describes him as “a man of great barbarity towards everyone.” An Idumaeon, married to the daughter of Hyrcanus, the last legal Hasmonean ruler, Herod was continually in fear of losing his throne. It is not surprising that the Wise Men’s report of the birth of an infant King of the Jews (Matthew 2) caused him fear and anger.

Although the event is not recorded in secular history, the story of the massacre of the Innocents is totally in keeping with what is known of Herod’s character.

To protect himself against being supplanted by an infant king, Herod ordered the slaughter of all male children under two years of age in Bethlehem and the surrounding region. No one knows how many were killed, but the Church has always honored these innocent children as martyrs. Augustine of Hippo called them “buds, killed by the frost of persecution the moment they showed themselves.”

THE HOLY NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST *January 1*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (1:1-7)

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 8

How exalted is your Name, O Lord, in all the world!

- 1 O LORD our Governor, *
how exalted is your Name in all the world!
- 2 Out of the mouths of infants and children *
your majesty is praised above the heavens.

How exalted is your Name, O Lord, in all the world!

- 3 You have set up a stronghold against your adversaries, *
to quell the enemy and the avenger.
- 4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, *
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

How exalted is your Name, O Lord, in all the world!

- 5 What is man that you should be mindful of him? *
the son of man that you should seek him out?
- 6 You have made him but little lower than the angels; *
you adorn him with glory and honor;

How exalted is your Name, O Lord, in all the world!

7 You give him mastery over the works of your hands; *
you put all things under his feet:

8 All sheep and oxen, *
even the wild beasts of the field,

How exalted is your Name, O Lord, in all the world!

9 The birds of the air, the fish of the sea, *
and whatsoever walks in the paths of the sea.

10 O LORD our Governor, *
how exalted is your Name in all the world!

How exalted is your Name, O Lord, in all the world!

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Luke (2:15-21)*

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. After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

The Gospel of the Lord

The designation of this day as the Feast of the Holy Name is new to the 1979 revision of the Prayer Book. Previous Anglican Prayer Books called it the Feast of the Circumcision. January first is, of course, the eighth day after Christmas Day, and the Gospel according to Luke records that eight days after his birth the child was circumcised and given the name Jesus.

The Law of Moses required that every male child be circumcised on the eighth day from his birth (Leviticus 12:3); and it had long been the custom to make of it a festive occasion, when family and friends came together to witness the naming of the child.

The liturgical commemoration of the Circumcision is of Gallican origin, and a Council in Tours in 567 enacted that the day was to be kept as a fast day to counteract pagan festivities connected with the beginning of the new year. In the Roman tradition, January first was observed as the octave day of Christmas, and it was specially devoted to the Virgin Mother.

The early preachers of the Gospel lay stress on the name as showing that Jesus was a man of flesh and blood, though also the Son of God, who died a human death, and whom God raised from death to be the Savior (Acts 2:32; 4:12). The name was given to Jesus, as the angel explained to Joseph, because he would “save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). (The word means “Savior” or “Deliverer” in Hebrew.)

Then as now, people longed to be freed from evils: political, social, and spiritual. The name of Jesus calls to mind the true freedom which is ours through Jesus the Christ.

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST *January 6*

A Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (3:1-12)

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— for surely you have already heard of the commission of God’s grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God’s grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 72:1-2,10-11,15

May all the earth be filled with the God’s glory.

- 1 Give the King your justice, O God, *
and your righteousness to the King’s Son;
- 2 That he may rule your people righteously *
and the poor with justice;

May all the earth be filled with the God’s glory.

- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute, *
and the kings of Arabia and Saba offer gifts.

11 All kings shall bow down before him, *
and all the nations do him service.

May all the earth be filled with the God's glory.

15 Long may he live!
and may there be given to him gold from Arabia; *
may prayer be made for him always,
and may they bless him all the day long.

May all the earth be filled with the God's glory.

✠ *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 Jews? 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.

The Gospel of the Lord

The name “Epiphany” is derived from a Greek word meaning “manifestation” or “appearing.” Anglican Prayer Books interpret the word with an alternative title, “The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.” The last phrase, of course, is a reference to the story of the Wise Men from the East.

A Christian observance on January 6 is found as early as the end of the second century in Egypt. The feast combined commemorations of the visit of the Magi, led by the star of Bethlehem; the Baptism of Jesus in the waters of the River Jordan; and Jesus’ first recorded miracle, the changing of water into wine at the marriage of Cana of Galilee—all thought of as manifestations of the incarnate Lord.

The Epiphany is still the primary Feast of the Incarnation in Eastern Churches, and the three-fold emphasis is still prominent. In the West, however, including Anglican Churches, the story of the Wise Men has tended to overshadow the other two events. Modern lectionary reform, reflected in the 1979 Prayer Book, has recovered the primitive trilogy, by setting the event of the Baptism as the theme of the First Sunday after the Epiphany in all three years, and by providing the story of the Miracle at Cana as the Gospel for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany in Year C.

William Laud *January 10*

A Reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah (6:1-8)

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

The Word of the Lord.

Psalm 73:24-29

I have made the Lord God my refuge.

- 24 You will guide me by your counsel, *
and afterwards receive me with glory.
25 Whom have I in heaven but you? *
and having you I desire nothing upon earth.

I have made the Lord God my refuge.

- 26 Though my flesh and my heart should waste away, *
God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.
27 Truly, those who forsake you will perish; *
you destroy all who are unfaithful.

I have made the Lord God my refuge.

28 But it is good for me to be near God; *
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge.
29 I will speak of all your works *
in the gates of the city of Zion.

I have made the Lord God my refuge.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (10:32-39)*

Jesus said, “Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

The Gospel of the Lord

William Laud, born in 1573, became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, having been Charles I's principal ecclesiastical adviser for several years before. He was the most prominent of a new generation of Churchmen who disliked many of the ritual practices which had developed during the reign of Elizabeth I, and who were bitterly opposed by the "Puritans."

Laud believed the Church of England to be in direct continuity with the medieval Church, and he stressed the unity of Church and State, exalting the role of the king as the supreme governor. He emphasized the priesthood and the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, and caused consternation by insisting on the reverencing of the Altar, returning it to its pre-Reformation position against the east wall of the church, and hedging it about with rails.

As head of the courts of High Commission and Star Chamber, Laud was abhorred for the harsh sentencing of prominent Puritans. His identification with the unpopular policies of King Charles, his support of the war against Scotland in 1640, and his efforts to make the Church independent of Parliament, made him widely disliked. He was impeached for treason by the Long Parliament in 1640, and finally beheaded on January 10, 1645.

Laud's reputation has remained controversial to this day. Honored as a martyr and condemned as an intolerant bigot, he was compassionate in his defense of the rights of the common people against the landowners. He was honest, devout, loyal to the king and to the rights and privileges of the Church of England. He tried to reform and protect the Church in accordance with his sincere convictions. But in many ways he was out of step with the views of the majority of his countrymen, especially about the "Divine Right of Kings."

He made a noble end, praying on the scaffold: "The Lord receive my soul, and have mercy upon me, and bless this kingdom with peace and charity, that there may not be this effusion of Christian blood amongst them."

St. Aelred of Rievaulx *January 12*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (2:1-4)

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 36:5-10

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens.

5 Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, *
and your faithfulness to the clouds.

6 Your righteousness is like the strong mountains,
your justice like the great deep; *
you save both man and beast, O LORD.

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens.

7 How priceless is your love, O God! *
your people take refuge under the
shadow of your wings.

8 They feast upon the abundance of your house; *
you give them drink from the river of your delights.

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens.

9 For with you is the well of life, *
and in your light we see light.

10 Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you, *
and your favor to those who are true of heart.

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (12:28-34a)*

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’ —this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

The Gospel of the Lord

Aelred was born in 1109, of a family which had long been treasurers of the shrine of Cuthbert of Lindisfarne at Durham Cathedral. While still a youth, he was sent for education in upper-class life to the court of King David of Scotland, son of Queen Margaret. The King's stepsons Simon and Waldef were his models and intimate friends.

After intense disillusion and inner struggle, Aelred went to Yorkshire, where he became a Cistercian monk at the abbey of Rievaulx in 1133. Aelred soon became a major figure in English church life. Sent to Rome on diocesan affairs of Archbishop William of York, he returned by way of Clairvaux. Here he made a deep impression on Bernard, who encouraged the young monk to write his first work, *Mirror of Charity*, on Christian perfection. In 1143, Aelred led the founding of a new Cistercian house at Revesby. Four years later he was appointed abbot of Rievaulx. By the time of his death from a painful kidney disease in 1167, the abbey had over 600 monks, including Aelred's biographer and friend, Walter Daniel. During this period, Aelred wrote his best known work, *Spiritual Friendship*.

Friendship, Aelred teaches, is both a gift from God and a creation of human effort. While love is universal, freely given to all, friendship is a particular love between individuals, of which the example is Jesus and John the Beloved Disciple. As abbot, Aelred allowed his monks to hold hands and give other expressions of friendship. In the spirit of Anselm of Canterbury and Bernard of Clairvaux, Aelred writes:

There are four qualities which characterize a friend: Loyalty, right intention, discretion, and patience. Right intention seeks for nothing other than God and natural good. Discretion brings understanding of what is done on a friend's behalf, and ability to know when to correct faults. Patience enables one to be justly rebuked, or to bear adversity on another's behalf. Loyalty guards and protects friendship, in good or bitter times.

St. Hilary of Poitiers *January 13*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (2:18-25)

Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and you know that no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he has promised us, eternal life.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 37:3-6, 32-33

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

- 3 Put your trust in the LORD and do good; *
dwell in the land and feed on its riches.
- 4 Take delight in the LORD, *
and he shall give you your heart's desire.

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

- 5 Commit your way to the LORD and put your trust in him, *
and he will bring it to pass.
- 6 He will make your righteousness as clear as the light *
and your just dealing as the noonday.

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

32 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, *
and their tongue speaks what is right.

33 The law of their God is in their heart, *
and their footsteps shall not falter.

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (12:8-12)*

Jesus said, “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, was a prolific writer on Scripture and doctrine, an orator, and a poet to whom some of the earliest Latin hymns have been attributed. Augustine called him “the illustrious doctor of the Churches.” Jerome considered him “the trumpet of the Latins against the Arians.”

Hilary was born in Poitiers in Gaul, about 315, into a pagan family of wealth and power. In his writings, he describes the stages of the spiritual journey that led him to the Christian faith. He was baptized when he was about thirty.

In 350, Hilary was made Bishop of Poitiers. Although he demurred, he was finally persuaded by the people’s acclamations. He proved to be a bishop of skill and courage. His Orthodoxy was shown when, in 355, the Emperor Constantius ordered all bishops to sign a condemnation of Athanasius, under pain of exile. Hilary wrote to Constantius, pleading for peace and unity. His plea accomplished nothing, and, when he dissociated himself from three Arian bishops in the West, Constantius ordered Julian (later surnamed the Apostate) to exile him to Phrygia. There he remained for three years, without complaining, writing scriptural commentaries and his principal work, *On the Trinity*.

Hilary was then invited by a party of “semi-Arians,” who hoped for his support, to a Council at Seleucia in Asia, largely attended by Arians; but with remarkable courage, in the midst of a hostile gathering, Hilary defended the Council of Nicaea and the Trinity, giving no aid to the “semi-Arians.” He wrote again to Constantius, offering to debate Saturninus, the Western bishop largely responsible for his exile. The Arians feared the results of such an encounter and persuaded Constantius to return Hilary to Poitiers.

In 360, Hilary was welcomed back to his see with great demonstrations of joy and affection. He continued his battle against Arianism, but he never neglected the needs of his people. Angry in controversy with heretical bishops, he was always a loving and compassionate pastor to his diocese. Among his disciples was Martin, later Bishop of Tours, whom Hilary encouraged in his endeavors to promote the monastic life.

Martin Luther King, Jr. *January 15 (see also April 4)*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (6:10-20)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

The Word of the Lord

Psalms 77:11-16, 19-20

I will remember the works of the Lord.

- 11 I will remember the works of the LORD, *
and call to mind your wonders of old time.
12 I will meditate on all your acts *
and ponder your mighty deeds.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

- 13 Your way, O God, is holy; *
who is so great a god as our God?
14 You are the God who works wonders *
and have declared your power among the peoples.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

15 By your strength you have redeemed your people, *
the children of Jacob and Joseph.

16 The waters saw you, O God;
the waters saw you and trembled; *
the very depths were shaken.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

19 Your way was in the sea,
and your paths in the great waters, *
yet your footsteps were not seen.

20 You led your people like a flock *
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (6:27-36)*

Jesus said, "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you." "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

The Gospel of the Lord

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta. As the son and grandson of Baptist preachers, he was steeped in the Black Church tradition. To this heritage he added a thorough academic preparation, earning the degrees of B.A., B.D., and Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University.

In 1954, King became pastor of a church in Montgomery, Alabama. There, Black indignation at inhumane treatment on segregated buses culminated in December, 1955, in the arrest of Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her seat to a white man. King was catapulted into national prominence as the leader of the Montgomery bus boycott. He became increasingly the articulate prophet, who could not only rally the Black masses, but could also move the consciences of Whites.

King founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to spearhead non-violent mass demonstrations against racism. Many confrontations followed, most notably in Birmingham and Selma, Alabama, and in Chicago. King's campaigns were instrumental to the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 1965 and 1968. King then turned his attention to economic empowerment of the poor and opposition to the Vietnam War, contending that racism, poverty and militarism were interrelated.

King lived in constant danger: his home was dynamited, he was almost fatally stabbed, and he was harassed by death threats. He was even jailed 30 times; but through it all he was sustained by his deep faith. In 1957, he received, late at night, a vicious telephone threat. Alone in his kitchen he wept and prayed. He relates that he heard the Lord speaking to him and saying, "Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness, stand up for justice," and promising never to leave him alone—"No, never alone." King refers to his vision as his "Mountaintop Experience."

After preaching at Washington Cathedral on March 31, 1968, King went to Memphis in support of sanitation workers in their struggle for better wages. There, he proclaimed that he had been "to the mountain-top" and had seen "the Promised Land," and that he knew that one day he and his people would be "free at last." On the following day, April 4, he was cut down by an assassin's bullet.

St. Antony of Egypt *January 17*

A Reading from the first Letter of Peter (5:6-10)

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 91:9-16

The Lord shall give his angels charge over you.

- 9 Because you have made the LORD your refuge, *
and the Most High your habitation,
10 There shall no evil happen to you, *
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.

The Lord shall give his angels charge over you.

- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over you, *
to keep you in all your ways.
12 They shall bear you in their hands, *
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

The Lord shall give his angels charge over you.

- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder; *
you shall trample the young lion and the serpent
under your feet.
14 Because he is bound to me in love,
therefore will I deliver him; *
I will protect him, because he knows my Name.

The Lord shall give his angels charge over you.

- 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; *
I am with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and bring him to honor.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy him, *
and show him my salvation.

The Lord shall give his angels charge over you.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (10:17-21)*

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, 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 murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’” He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

The Gospel of the Lord

In the third century, many young men turned away from the corrupt and decadent society of the time, and went to live in deserts or mountains, in solitude, fasting, and prayer. Antony of Egypt was an outstanding example of this movement, but he was not merely a recluse. He was a founder of monasticism, and wrote a rule for anchorites. Antony's parents were Christians, and he grew up to be quiet, devout, and meditative. When his parents died, he and his younger sister were left to care for a sizable estate. Six months later, in church, he heard the reading about the rich young ruler whom Christ advised to sell all he had and give to the poor. Antony at once gave his land to the villagers, and sold most of his goods, giving the proceeds to the poor. Later, after meditating on Christ's bidding, "Do not be anxious about tomorrow," he sold what remained of his possessions, placed his sister in a "house of maidens," and became an anchorite (solitary ascetic).

Athanasius, who knew Antony personally, writes that he spent his days praying, reading, and doing manual labor. For a time, he was tormented by demons in various guises. He resisted, and the demons fled. Moving to the mountains across the Nile from his village, Antony dwelt alone for twenty years. In 305, he left his cave and founded a "monastery," a series of cells inhabited by ascetics living under his rule. Athanasius writes of such colonies: "Their cells like tents were filled with singing, fasting, praying, and working that they might give alms, and having love and peace with one another."

Antony visited Alexandria, first in 321, to encourage those suffering martyrdom under the Emperor Maximinus; later, in 355, to combat the Arians by preaching, conversions, and the working of miracles. Most of his days were spent on the mountain with his disciple Macarius.

He willed a goat-skin tunic and a cloak to Athanasius, who said of him: "He was like a physician given by God to Egypt. For who met him grieving and did not go away rejoicing? Who came full of anger and was not turned to kindness? ... What monk who had grown slack was not strengthened by coming to him? Who came troubled by doubts and failed to gain peace of mind?"

CONFESSION OF SAINT PETER THE APOSTLE *January 18*

A Reading from the Book of Acts (4:8-13)

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is ‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.’ There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; *
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures *
and leads me beside still waters.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

- 3 He revives my soul *
and guides me along right pathways for his Name’s sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil; *
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

- 5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those
who trouble me; *
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (16:13-19)*

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord

When Simon Bar-Jona confessed, “You are the Christ,” Jesus responded, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church.” This rough fisherman and his brother Andrew were the first disciples called by Jesus. Peter figures prominently in the Gospels, often stumbling, impetuous, intense, and uncouth.

It was Peter who attempted to walk on the sea, and began to sink; it was Peter who impulsively wished to build three tabernacles on the mountain of the Transfiguration; it was Peter who, just before the crucifixion, three times denied knowing his Lord.

But it was also Peter who, after Pentecost, risked his life to do the Lord’s work, speaking boldly of his belief in Jesus. It was also Peter, the Rock, whose strength and courage helped the young Church in its questioning about the mission beyond the Jewish community. Opposed at first to the baptism of Gentiles, he had the humility to admit a change of heart, and to baptize the Roman centurion Cornelius and his household. Even after this, Peter had a continuing struggle with his Jewish conservatism; for Paul, writing to the Galatians, rebukes him for giving way to the demands of Jewish Christians to dissociate himself from table-fellowship with Gentiles.

Though the New Testament makes no mention of it, the tradition connecting Peter with Rome is early and virtually certain. According to a legend based on that tradition, Peter fled from Rome during the persecution under Nero. On the Appian Way, he met Christ, and asked him, “Domine, quo vadis?” (“Lord, where are you going?”). The Lord answered, “I am coming to be crucified again.” Peter thereupon retraced his steps, and was shortly thereafter crucified, head downwards. “I am not worthy to be crucified as my Lord was,” he is supposed to have said.

As we watch Peter struggle with himself, often stumble, love his Lord and deny him, speak rashly and act impetuously, his life reminds us that our Lord did not come to save the godly and strong but to save the weak and the sinful. Simon, an ordinary human being, was transformed by the Holy Spirit into the “Rock,” and became the leader of the Church.

St. Wulfstan *January 19*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (4:1-5)

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 146:4-9

Praise the Lord, O my soul.

- 4 Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help! *
whose hope is in the LORD their God;
5 Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; *
who keeps his promise for ever;

Praise the Lord, O my soul.

- 6 Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, *
and food to those who hunger.
7 The LORD sets the prisoners free;
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind; *
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;

Praise the Lord, O my soul.

- 8 The LORD loves the righteous;
the LORD cares for the stranger; *
he sustains the orphan and widow,
but frustrates the way of the wicked.
- 9 The LORD shall reign for ever, *
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.
Hallelujah!

Praise the Lord, O my soul.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (15:5-8,14-16)*

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

The Gospel of the Lord

Wulfstan was one of the few Anglo-Saxon bishops to retain his see after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066. Beloved by all classes of society for his humility, charity, and courage, he was born in Warwickshire about 1008, and educated in the Benedictine abbeys of Evesham and Peterborough. He spent most of his life in the cathedral monastery of Worcester as monk, prior, and then as bishop of the see from 1062 until his death on January 18, 1095. He accepted the episcopate with extreme reluctance, but having resigned himself to it, he administered the diocese with great effectiveness. Since the see of Worcester was claimed by the province of York before its affiliation as a suffragan see of Canterbury in 1070, Wulfstan was consecrated at York. As bishop, he rapidly became famous for his continued monastic asceticism and personal sanctity.

Even though Wulfstan had been sympathetic to King Harold of Wessex, he was among those who submitted to William the Conqueror at Berkhamstead in 1066. He therefore was allowed to retain his see. At first, the Normans tended to disparage him for his lack of learning and his inability to speak French, but he became one of William's most trusted advisers and administrators, and remained loyal in support of William I and William II in their work of reform and orderly government. He assisted in the compilation of the Domesday Book, and supported William I against the rebellious barons in 1075. William came to respect a loyalty based on principle and not on self-seeking. Archbishop Lanfranc also recognized the strength of Wulfstan's character, and the two men worked together to end the practice at Bristol of kidnaping Englishmen and selling them as slaves in Ireland.

Because he was the most respected prelate of the Anglo-Saxon Church, Wulfstan's profession of canonical obedience to William the Conqueror's Archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc, proved to be a key factor in the transition from Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman Christianity. William's policy, however, was to appoint his own fellow Normans to the English episcopate, and by the time of William's death, in 1087, Wulfstan was the only English-born bishop still living.

St. Fabian *January 20*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (15:31-36,44b-49)

I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you—a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord. If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 126

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

- 1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, *
 then were we like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
 and our tongue with shouts of joy.
- 3 Then they said among the nations, *
 “The LORD has done great things for them.”

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

4 The LORD has done great things for us, *
and we are glad indeed.

5 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, *
like the watercourses of the Negev.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

6 Those who sowed with tears *
will reap with songs of joy.

7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (21:20-24)*

Jesus said, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Gospel of the Lord

In 236, an assembly was held at Rome to elect a pope as successor to Antherus. In the throng was Fabian, a layman from another part of Italy. Suddenly, according to the historian Eusebius, a dove flew over the crowd and lighted on Fabian's head. In spite of the fact that he was both a total stranger and not even a candidate for election, the people unanimously chose Fabian to be pope, shouting, "He is worthy! He is worthy!" Fabian was ordained to the episcopate without opposition.

During his fourteen years as pontiff, Fabian made numerous administrative reforms. He developed the parochial structure of the Church in Rome, and established the custom of venerating martyrs at their shrines in the catacombs. He appointed seven deacons and seven sub-deacons to write the lives of the martyrs, so that their deeds should not be forgotten in times to come.

When Privatus, in Africa, stirred up a new heresy, Fabian vigorously opposed and condemned his actions. He also brought back to Rome, for proper burial, the remains of Pontian, a pope whom the emperor had exiled in 235 to a certain and rapid death in the mines of Sardinia.

The Emperor Decius ordered a general persecution of the Church in 239 and 240, probably the first persecution to be carried out in all parts of the empire. Fabian was one of the earliest of those martyred, setting a courageous example for his followers, many of whom died in great torment.

Cyprian of Carthage, in a letter to Cornelius, Fabian's successor, wrote that Fabian was an incomparable man. "The glory of his death," Cyprian commented, "befitted the purity and holiness of his life."

Fabian's tombstone, the slab which covered his gravesite, still exists. It is in fragments, but the words "Fabian ... bishop ... martyr" are still dimly visible.

St. Agnes of Rome *January 21*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (6:16-18)

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 116:1-7

I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

- 1 I love the LORD, because he has heard the voice of
my supplication, *
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever
I called upon him.

I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

- 2 The cords of death entangled me;
the grip of the grave took hold of me; *
I came to grief and sorrow.
- 3 Then I called upon the Name of the LORD: *
“O LORD, I pray you, save my life.”

I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

- 4 Gracious is the LORD and righteous; *
our God is full of compassion.
- 5 The LORD watches over the innocent; *
I was brought very low, and he helped me.

I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

- 6 Turn again to your rest, O my soul, *
for the LORD has treated you well.
- 7 For you have rescued my life from death, *
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.

I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (18:1-6)*

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.

The Gospel of the Lord

As a child of twelve years, Agnes suffered for her faith, in Rome, during the cruel persecution of the Emperor Diocletian. After rejecting blandishments and withstanding threats and tortures by her executioner, she remained firm in refusal to offer worship to the heathen gods, and was burned at the stake—or, according to another early tradition, was beheaded with the sword. The early Fathers of the Church praised her courage and chastity, and remarked upon her name, which means “pure” in Greek and “lamb” in Latin.

Pilgrims still visit Agnes’ tomb and the catacomb surrounding it, beneath the basilica of her name on the Via Nomentana in Rome that Pope Honorius I (625–638) built in her honor to replace an older shrine erected by the Emperor Constantine. On her feast day at the basilica, two lambs are blessed, whose wool is woven into a scarf called the pallium, with which the Pope invests archbishops. Pope Gregory the Great sent such a pallium in 601 to Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury. A representation of the pall appears on the coat of arms of Archbishops of Canterbury to this day.

St. Vincent of Saragossa *January 22*

A Reading from the Book of Revelation (7:13-17)

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 116:10-17

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

- 10 How shall I repay the LORD *
for all the good things he has done for me?
11 I will lift up the cup of salvation *
and call upon the Name of the LORD.

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

- 12 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people.
13 Precious in the sight of the LORD *
is the death of his servants.

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

- 14 O LORD, I am your servant; *
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.
- 15 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and call upon the Name of the LORD.

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

- 16 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people,
- 17 In the courts of the LORD'S house, *
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Hallelujah!

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (12:4-12)*

Jesus said, "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows." "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say."

The Gospel of the Lord

Vincent has been called the protomartyr of Spain. Little is known about the actual events surrounding his life, other than his name, his order of ministry, and the place and time of his martyrdom. He was a native of Huesca, in northeastern Spain, and was ordained deacon by Valerius, Bishop of Saragossa. In the early years of the fourth century, the fervent Christian community in Spain fell victim to a persecution ordered by the Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Dacian, governor of Spain, arrested Valerius and his deacon Vincent, and had them imprisoned at Valencia.

According to one legend, Valerius had a speech impediment, and Vincent was often called upon to preach for him. When the two prisoners were challenged to renounce their faith, amid threats of torture and death, Vincent said to his bishop, "Father, if you order me, I will speak." Valerius is said to have replied, "Son, as I committed you to dispense the word of God, so I now charge you to answer in vindication of the faith which we defend." The young deacon then told the governor that he and his bishop had no intention of betraying the true God. The vehemence and enthusiasm of Vincent's defense showed no caution in his defiance of the judges, and Dacian's fury was increased by this exuberance in Christian witness. Valerius was exiled, but the angry Dacian ordered that Vincent be tortured.

Although the accounts of his martyrdom have been heavily embellished by early Christian poets, Augustine of Hippo writes that Vincent's unshakeable faith enabled him to endure grotesque punishments and, finally, death.

Records of the transfer and present whereabouts of Vincent's relics are of questionable authenticity. We are certain, however, that his cult spread rapidly throughout early Christendom and that he was venerated as a bold and outspoken witness to the truth of the living Christ.

CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE *January 25*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (26:9-21)

Paul said, “Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities. With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ “After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 67

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

- 1 May God be merciful to us and bless us, *
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

- 2 Let your ways be known upon earth, *
your saving health among all nations.
- 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

- 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, *
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations upon earth.
- 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

- 6 The earth has brought forth her increase; *
may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
- 7 May God give us his blessing, *
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (10:16-22)*

Jesus said, "See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

The Gospel of the Lord

Paul, or Saul as he was known until he became a Christian, was a Roman citizen, born at Tarsus, in present-day Turkey. He was brought up as an orthodox Jew, studying in Jerusalem for a time under Gamaliel, the most famous rabbi of the day. Describing himself, he said, "I am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin" (Romans 11:1).

A few years after the death of Jesus, Saul came in contact with the new Christian movement, and became one of the most fanatical of those who were determined to stamp out this "dangerous heresy." Saul witnessed the stoning of Stephen. He was on the way to Damascus to lead in further persecution of the Christians when his dramatic conversion took place.

From that day, Paul devoted his life totally to Christ, and especially to the conversion of Gentiles. The Acts of the Apostles describes the courage and determination with which he planted Christian congregations over a large area of the land bordering the eastern Mediterranean.

His letters, the earliest of Christian writings, reveal him as the greatest of the interpreters of Christ's mind, and as the founder of Christian theology. He writes, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Paul describes himself as small and insignificant in appearance: "His letters are weighty and strong," it was said of him, "but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account" (2 Corinthians 10:10). He writes of having a disability which he had prayed God to remove from him, and quotes the Lord's reply, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, Paul went on to say, "I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Paul is believed to have been martyred at Rome in the year 64 under Nero.

St. Timothy, St. Titus, & St. Silas *January 26*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (16:1-5)

Paul went on also to Derbe and to Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went from town to town, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 112:1-9

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 1 Hallelujah!
 Happy are they who fear the Lord *
 and have great delight in his commandments!
- 2 Their descendants will be mighty in the land; *
 the generation of the upright will be blessed.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 3 Wealth and riches will be in their house, *
 and their righteousness will last for ever.
- 4 Light shines in the darkness for the upright; *
 the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 5 It is good for them to be generous in lending *
 and to manage their affairs with justice.
- 6 For they will never be shaken; *
 the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 7 They will not be afraid of any evil rumors; *
their heart is right;
they put their trust in the Lord.
- 8 Their heart is established and will not shrink, *
until they see their desire upon their enemies.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 9 They have given freely to the poor, *
and their righteousness stands fast for ever;
they will hold up their head with honor.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (10:1-10)*

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

The Gospel of the Lord

Timothy and Silas are mentioned in The Acts of the Apostles. Timothy's father was Greek and his mother a Jewish believer. Paul chose him as a companion for his mission to Asia Minor but had him circumcised because the "Jews who were in those places" knew that his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1–3). Timothy undertook missions to the Thessalonians, Corinthians and the Ephesians. Eusebius counts him as the first bishop of that city.

Silas is known by his Latinized name Silvanus when Paul cites him as his companion along with Timothy (1 & 2 Thessalonians 1:1). He was a prophet in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22–35), but also a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37–8). He went with Paul and Barnabas to deliver the decision of the apostolic council in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–21) that Gentile believers did not have to observe the law of Moses. Paul chose Silas to accompany him on missions to Asia Minor and Macedonia where he may have remained after Paul left (Acts 15:41–18:5). Tradition has it that he died there after some years of missionary work.

Titus, a Greek, accompanied Paul to Jerusalem for the apostolic council. During Paul's third missionary journey Titus was sent on missions to Corinth from which he gave Paul encouraging reports (2 Corinthians 7:13–15). Paul, who calls him: "my true child in the common faith" (Titus 1:14) left him to organize the church in Crete (Titus 1:5) and Eusebius reports that he was the first bishop there.

These three are celebrated on the day after the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul because of their close connections with him. Though they were all young and inexperienced, they were entrusted with missions and matters that helped form the very life and history of the Church. Faithfulness, love and devotion to Christ saw them through situations they could not have imagined.

St. John Chrysostom *January 27*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (12:31-13:7)

But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 49:1-8

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

- 1 Hear this, all you peoples;
hearken, all you who dwell in the world, *
you of high degree and low, rich and poor together.
- 2 My mouth shall speak of wisdom, *
and my heart shall meditate on understanding.

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

- 3 I will incline my ear to a proverb *
and set forth my riddle upon the harp.
- 4 Why should I be afraid in evil days, *
when the wickedness of those at my heels surrounds me,

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

5 The wickedness of those who put their trust in their goods, *
and boast of their great riches?

6 We can never ransom ourselves, *
or deliver to God the price of our life;

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

7 For the ransom of our life is so great, *
that we should never have enough to pay it,

8 In order to live for ever and ever, *
and never see the grave.

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (21:12-15)*

Jesus said, "But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.

The Gospel of the Lord

John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, is one of the great saints of the Eastern Church. He was born about 354 in Antioch, Syria. As a young man, he responded to the call of desert monasticism until his health was impaired. He returned to Antioch after six years, and was ordained a presbyter. In 397, he became Patriarch of Constantinople. His episcopate was short and tumultuous. Many criticized his ascetical life in the episcopal residence, and he incurred the wrath of the Empress Eudoxia, who believed that he had called her a “Jezebel.” He was twice exiled, and he died during the second period of banishment, on September 14, 407. Thirty-one years later, his remains were brought back to Constantinople, and buried on January 27.

John, called “Chrysostom,” which means “the golden-mouthed,” was one of the greatest preachers in the history of the Church. People flocked to hear him. His eloquence was accompanied by an acute sensitivity to the needs of people. He saw preaching as an integral part of pastoral care, and as a medium of teaching. He warned that if a priest had no talent for preaching the Word, the souls of those in his charge “will fare no better than ships tossed in the storm.”

His sermons provide insights into the liturgy of the Church, and especially into eucharistic practices. He describes the liturgy as a glorious experience, in which all of heaven and earth join. His sermons emphasize the importance of lay participation in the Eucharist. “Why do you marvel,” he wrote, “that the people anywhere utter anything with the priest at the altar, when in fact they join with the Cherubim themselves, and the heavenly powers, in offering up sacred hymns?”

His treatise, *Six Books on the Priesthood*, is a classic manual on the priestly office and its awesome demands. The priest, he wrote, must be “dignified, but not haughty; awe-inspiring, but kind; affable in his authority; impartial, but courteous; humble, but not servile, strong but gentle ... ”

St. Thomas Aquinas *January 28*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (11:23-26)

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 37:3-4,32-33

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom.

- 3 Put your trust in the LORD and do good; *
dwell in the land and feed on its riches.
- 4 Take delight in the LORD, *
and he shall give you your heart’s desire.

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom.

- 5 Commit your way to the LORD and put your trust in him, *
and he will bring it to pass.
- 6 He will make your righteousness as clear as the light *
and your just dealing as the noonday.

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom.

- 32 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, *
and their tongue speaks what is right.
- 33 The law of their God is in their heart, *
and their footsteps shall not falter.

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (13:47-52)*

Jesus said, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Thomas Aquinas is the greatest theologian of the high Middle Ages, and, next to Augustine, perhaps the greatest theologian in the history of Western Christianity. Born into a noble Italian family, probably in 1225, he entered the new Dominican Order of Preachers, and soon became an outstanding teacher in an age of intellectual ferment.

Perceiving the challenges that the recent rediscovery of Aristotle's works might entail for traditional catholic doctrine, especially in its emphasis upon empirical knowledge derived from reason and sense perception, independent of faith and revelation, Thomas asserted that reason and revelation are in basic harmony. "Grace" (revelation), he said, "is not the denial of nature" (reason), "but the perfection of it." This synthesis Thomas accomplished in his greatest works, the *Summa Theologica* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, which even today continue to exercise profound influence on Christian thought and philosophy. He was considered a bold thinker, even a "radical," and certain aspects of his thought were condemned by the ecclesiastical authorities. His canonization on July 18, 1323, vindicated him.

Thomas understood God's disclosure of his Name, in Exodus 3:14, "I Am Who I Am," to mean that God is Being, the Ultimate Reality from which everything else derives its being. The difference between God and the world is that God's essence is to exist, whereas all other beings derive their being from him by the act of creation. Although, for Thomas, God and the world are distinct, there is, nevertheless, an analogy of being between God and the world, since the Creator is reflected in his creation. It is possible, therefore, to have a limited knowledge of God, by analogy from the created world. On this basis, human reason can demonstrate that God exists; that he created the world; and that he contains in himself, as their cause, all the perfections which exist in his creation. The distinctive truths of Christian faith, however, such as the Trinity and the Incarnation, are known only by revelation.

Thomas died in 1274, just under fifty years of age. In 1369, on January 28, his remains were transferred to Toulouse. In addition to his many theological writings, he composed several eucharistic hymns. They include "O saving Victim" and "Now, my tongue, the mystery telling."

St. Brigid of Kildare *February 1*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (1:26-31)

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 138

The love of the Lord endures forever.

- 1 I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart; *
before the gods I will sing your praise.
- 2 I will bow down toward your holy temple
and praise your Name, *
because of your love and faithfulness;

The love of the Lord endures forever.

- 3 For you have glorified your Name *
and your word above all things.
- 4 When I called, you answered me; *
you increased my strength within me.

The love of the Lord endures forever.

- 5 All the kings of the earth will praise you, O LORD, *
when they have heard the words of your mouth.
- 6 They will sing of the ways of the LORD, *
that great is the glory of the LORD.

The love of the Lord endures forever.

- 7 Though the LORD be high, he cares for the lowly; *
he perceives the haughty from afar.
- 8 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; *
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;
your right hand shall save me.

The love of the Lord endures forever.

- 9 The LORD will make good his purpose for me; *
O LORD, your love endures for ever;
do not abandon the works of your hands.

The love of the Lord endures forever.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (6:25-33)*

Jesus said, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Next to Patrick, Brigid is the most beloved of Irish saints. Born at Fauchart about the middle of the fifth century, she may have met Patrick as a young girl. She was said to be the daughter of Dubhthach, poet laureate of King Loeghaire, and was reared in a Druid household. She decided early in life to dedicate her life to God alone as a Christian. She received a nun's veil from Bishop Macaile of Westmeath.

Gathering around her a group of women, Brigid, in 470, founded a nunnery at Kildare, a place whose name meant "Church of the Oak." Here had flourished the cult of a pagan goddess, from which it was said to have derived the sacred fire, which she and her successors maintained. To secure the sacraments, Brigid persuaded the anchorite Conlaed to receive episcopal ordination and to bring his community of monks to Kildare, thus establishing the only known Irish double monastery of men and women.

Brigid actively participated in policymaking decisions in Church conventions. One story has it that she received episcopal orders, which may reflect only the fact that she exercised the jurisdictional authority that was customarily wielded by medieval abbesses.

Many stories are told of Brigid's concern for the poor and needy. When a leper woman asked for milk she was healed also of her infirmity. Two blind men were given their sight. Best known is the tale that tells of Brigid's taming of a wolf at the request of a local chieftain whose pet dog had been killed accidentally by a peasant. The Gaelic name given to the oyster-catching bird, galle-brigade, attests to her affinity for birds. Her feast day itself, February 1, was long held sacred as Imbolg, the Celtic festival of Spring.

Brigid died about 523 at Kildare, outside whose small cathedral the foundations of her fire-house are still shown to tourists. Her remains are said to have been re-interred, at the time of the Danish invasions of the ninth century, with those of Patrick, at Downpatrick. Brigid, also known as Bride, was very popular both in Scotland and England, where many churches have been dedicated to her. The best known of them is that church which was designed by Christopher Wren on Fleet Street in London. In Wales, Brigid achieved fame under her Gaelic name Ffraid.

PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST *February 2*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (2:14-18)

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 84:1-6

Happy are they whose strength is in the Lord.

- 1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD of hosts! *
My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of
the LORD;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- 2 The sparrow has found her a house
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *
by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts,
my King and my God.

Happy are they whose strength is in the Lord.

- 3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! *
they will always be praising you.
- 4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! *
whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

Happy are they whose strength is in the Lord.

- 5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find
it a place of springs, *
for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

6 They will climb from height to height, *
and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.

Happy are they whose strength is in the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (2:22-40)*

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Today's Feast is sometimes known as the Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin, sometimes as Candlemas. In the Eastern Church it has been called the Meeting of Christ with Simeon. Such a variety of names is sufficient testimony to the wealth of spiritual meaning that generations of Christians have discovered in this small incident.

The title, "The Presentation," reminds us of the Jewish law (Exodus 13:2; 22:29) that every firstborn son had to be dedicated to God in memory of the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt, when the firstborn sons of the Egyptians died and those of Israel were spared.

When Mary placed her small son into the arms of Simeon, it was the meeting of the Old and New Dispensations. The old sacrifices, the burnt offerings and oblations, were done away; a new and perfect offering had come into the temple. God had provided himself a lamb for the burnt-offering (Genesis 22:8), his only Son. The offering was to be made once for all on the cross. At every Eucharist those who are in Christ recall that sinless offering and unite "themselves, their souls and bodies" with the self-oblation of their Lord and Savior.

St. Anskar *February 3*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (1:1-9)

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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 69:13-16

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song, *
for he has done marvelous things.
- 2 With his right hand and his holy arm *
has he won for himself the victory.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 3 The LORD has made known his victory; *
his righteousness has he openly shown in
the sight of the nations.
- 4 He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to
the house of Israel, *
and all the ends of the earth have seen the
victory of our God.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (6:7-13)*

Jesus called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

The Gospel of the Lord

Anskar (Latinized as Ansgarius) was one of those valiant Christians of whom it might be said, "These shall plant the seed, but others shall reap the harvest." As Archbishop of Hamburg, he was papal legate for missionary work among the Scandinavians. The immediate result of his devoted and perilous labors was slight: two churches established on the border of Denmark and one priest settled in Sweden. He also participated in the consecration of Gotbert, first bishop in Sweden.

Anskar was born in Corbie, France, in 801, and educated in the outstanding monastic school there. His teaching skill led him to be chosen master of a new monastery school, sent out by Corbie, in Saxon Germany. His strongest call, however, was to be a missionary.

He was stirred, his biographer Rimbert says, by a prolonged vision, in which a voice said, "Go and return to me crowned with martyrdom." When King Harald of Denmark sought missionaries for that country in 826, Anskar was one of those selected. Rimbert notes that Anskar's missionary purpose caused astonishment. Why should he wish to leave his brothers to deal with "unknown and barbarous folk?" Some of the brethren tried to deter him; others considered him a freak.

Steadfast in his resolve, Anskar established a school and mission in Denmark, working conscientiously but unsuccessfully to convert and evangelize. He was not totally discouraged. Another vision appeared, with a voice saying, "Go and declare the work of God to the nations." Shortly afterward (about 829), he was called to Sweden and eagerly accepted. Meager aid both from the monastery and the emperor frustrated his efforts.

While still a young man, Anskar was consecrated Archbishop of Hamburg in 831, and continued his work among the Scandinavians until 848, when he retired to the See of Bremen. The seeds of his efforts were not to bear fruit until over one hundred years later, when Viking devastation, weakness in the Frankish Church, and the lowest ebb of missionary enthusiasm, came to an end. The rich harvest of conversion was three generations away. Nevertheless, Anskar is looked upon by Scandinavians as their apostle.

St. Cornelius *February 4*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (11:1-18)

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, “Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?” Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ But I replied, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ But a second time the voice answered from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, you must not call profane.’ This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?” When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, “Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 67:1-5

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

- 1 May God be merciful to us and bless us, *
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.
- 2 Let your ways be known upon earth, *
your saving health among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

- 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
- 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, *
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations upon earth.
- 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (13:22-29)*

Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then in reply he will say to you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say, 'I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out. Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God.

The Gospel of the Lord

All that we know about Cornelius is contained in the Acts of the Apostles (chapters 10–11). He was the first Gentile converted to the Christian faith, along with his household. A centurion was commander of a company of one hundred men in the Roman army, responsible for their discipline, both on the field of battle and in camp. A centurion was a Roman citizen, a military career man, well-paid, and generally noted for courage and competence. Some centurions, such as Cornelius, and those whom we know about from the Gospel narratives, were men of deep religious piety.

The author of Acts considered Cornelius' conversion very momentous for the future of Christianity. He records that it occurred as the result of divine intervention and revelation, and as a response to the preaching of Peter the chief apostle. The experience of Cornelius' household was regarded as comparable to a new Pentecost, and it was a primary precedent for the momentous decision of the apostolic council, held in Jerusalem a few years later, to admit Gentiles to full and equal partnership with Jewish converts in the household of faith.

According to tradition, Cornelius was the second Bishop of Caesarea, the metropolitan see of Palestine. Undoubtedly, Cornelius and his household formed the nucleus of the first Church in this important city, a Church that was gathered by Philip the Evangelist (Acts 8:40 and 21:8).

The Martyrs of Japan February 5

A Reading from the Galatians (2:19-20)

For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 16:5-11

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 5 O LORD, you are my portion and my cup; *
it is you who uphold my lot.
- 6 My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; *
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 7 I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel; *
my heart teaches me, night after night.
- 8 I have set the LORD always before me; *
because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 9 My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; *
my body also shall rest in hope.
- 10 For you will not abandon me to the grave, *
nor let your holy one see the Pit.
- 11 You will show me the path of life; *
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (8:34-38)*

Jesus 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord

The introduction of Christianity into Japan in the sixteenth century, first by the Jesuits under Francis Xavier, and then by the Franciscans, has left exciting records of heroism and self-sacrifice in the annals of Christian missionary endeavor. It has been estimated that by the end of that century there were about 300,000 baptized believers in Japan.

Unfortunately, these initial successes were compromised by rivalries among the religious orders; and the interplay of colonial politics, both within Japan and between Japan and the Spanish and Portuguese, aroused suspicion about western intentions of conquest. After a half century of ambiguous support by some of the powerful Tokugawa shoguns, the Christian enterprise suffered cruel persecution and suppression.

The first victims were six Franciscan friars and twenty of their converts who were crucified at Nagasaki, February 5, 1597. By 1630, what was left of Christianity in Japan was driven underground. Yet it is remarkable that two hundred and fifty years later there were found many men and women, without priests, who had preserved through the generations a vestige of Christian faith.

Absalom Jones *February 13*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians (5:1-5)

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law. You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 137:1-6

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept.

- 1 By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, *
when we remembered you, O Zion.
- 2 As for our harps, we hung them up *
on the trees in the midst of that land.

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept.

- 3 For those who led us away captive asked us for a song,
and our oppressors called for mirth: *
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”
- 4 How shall we sing the LORD’S song *
upon an alien soil?

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept.

- 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, *
let my right hand forget its skill.
- 6 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you, *
if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (15:12-15)*

Jesus said, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

The Gospel of the Lord

Absalom Jones was born a house slave in 1746 in Delaware. He taught himself to read out of the New Testament, among other books. When sixteen, he was sold to a store owner in Philadelphia. There he attended a night school for Blacks, operated by Quakers. At twenty, he married another slave, and purchased her freedom with his earnings.

Jones bought his own freedom in 1784. At St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, he served as lay minister for its Black membership. The active evangelism of Jones and that of his friend, Richard Allen, greatly increased Black membership at St. George's. The alarmed vestry decided to segregate Blacks into an upstairs gallery, without notifying them. During a Sunday service when ushers attempted to remove them, the Blacks indignantly walked out in a body.

In 1787, Black Christians organized the Free African Society, the first organized Afro-American society, and Absalom Jones and Richard Allen were elected overseers. Members of the Society paid monthly dues for the benefit of those in need. The Society established communication with similar Black groups in other cities. In 1792, the Society began to build a church, which was dedicated on July 17, 1794.

The African Church applied for membership in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania on the following conditions: 1, that they be received as an organized body; 2, that they have control over their local affairs; 3, that Absalom Jones be licensed as layreader, and, if qualified, be ordained as minister. In October 1794 it was admitted as St. Thomas African Episcopal Church. Bishop White ordained Jones as deacon in 1795 and as priest on September 21, 1802.

Jones was an earnest preacher. He denounced slavery, and warned the oppressors to "clean their hands of slaves." To him, God was the Father, who always acted on "behalf of the oppressed and distressed." But it was his constant visiting and mild manner that made him beloved by his own flock and by the community. St. Thomas Church grew to over 500 members during its first year. Known as "the Black Bishop of the Episcopal Church," Jones was an example of persistent faith in God and in the Church as God's instrument.

St. Cyril and St. Methodius *February 14*

A Reading from the Ephesians (3:1-7)

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— for surely you have already heard of the commission of God’s grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God’s grace that was given me by the working of his power.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 69:8-18

In your great compassion, turn to me, O Lord.

- 8 Surely, for your sake have I suffered reproach, *
and shame has covered my face.
- 9 I have become a stranger to my own kindred, *
an alien to my mother’s children.
- 10 Zeal for your house has eaten me up; *
the scorn of those who scorn you has fallen upon me.

In your great compassion, turn to me, O Lord.

- 11 I humbled myself with fasting, *
but that was turned to my reproach.
- 12 I put on sack-cloth also, *
and became a byword among them.
- 13 Those who sit at the gate murmur against me, *
and the drunkards make songs about me.

In your great compassion, turn to me, O Lord.

- 14 But as for me, this is my prayer to you, *
at the time you have set, O LORD:
- 15 “In your great mercy, O God, *
answer me with your unfailing help.
- 16 Save me from the mire; do not let me sink; *
let me be rescued from those who hate me
and out of the deep waters.

In your great compassion, turn to me, O Lord.

- 17 Let not the torrent of waters wash over me,
neither let the deep swallow me up; *
do not let the Pit shut its mouth upon me.
- 18 Answer me, O LORD, for your love is kind; *
in your great compassion, turn to me.”

In your great compassion, turn to me, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (16:15-20)*

And Jesus said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

The Gospel of the Lord

Cyril and Methodius, brothers born in Thessalonika, are honored as apostles to the southern Slavs and as the founders of Slavic literary culture. Cyril was a student of philosophy and a deacon, who eventually became a missionary monastic. Methodius was first the governor of a Slavic colony, then turned to the monastic life, and was later elected abbot of a monastery in Constantinople.

In 862, the King of Moravia asked for missionaries who would teach his people in their native language. Since both Cyril and Methodius knew Slavonic, and both were learned men—Cyril was known as “the Philosopher”—the Patriarch chose them to lead the mission. As part of his task among the Moravians, Cyril invented an alphabet to transcribe the native tongue, probably the “glagolitic,” in which Slavo-Roman liturgical books in Russian and Serbian are still written. The so-called “cyrillic” alphabet is thought to have been originated by Cyril’s followers.

Pressures by the German clergy, who opposed the brothers’ teaching, preaching, and writing in Slavonic, and the lack of a bishop to ordain new priests for their people, caused the two brothers to seek foreign help. They found a warm welcome at Rome from Pope Adrian II, who determined to ordain both men bishops and approved the Slavonic liturgy. Cyril died in Rome and was buried there. Methodius, now a bishop, returned to Moravia as Metropolitan of Sirmium.

Methodius, still harassed by German bishops, was imprisoned at their behest. Eventually, he was released by Pope John VIII, on the condition that Slavonic, “a barbarous language,” be used only for preaching. Later, the enmity of the Moravian prince caused Methodius to be recalled to Rome on charges of heresy. Papal support again allowed him to return to Moravia and to use Slavonic in the liturgy.

Methodius completed a Slavonic translation of the Bible and of Byzantine ecclesiastical law, while continuing his missionary activities. At his funeral, celebrated in Greek, Latin, and Slavonic, “the people came together in huge numbers ... for Methodius had been all things to all people that he might lead them all to heaven.”

John Henry Newman *February 21*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (4:13-21)

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 48:1-4,7-10,13

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised.

- 1 Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised; *
 in the city of our God is his holy hill.
- 2 Beautiful and lofty, the joy of all the earth, is the
 hill of Zion, *
 the very center of the world and the city of the great King.

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised.

- 3 God is in her citadels; *
 he is known to be her sure refuge.
- 4 Behold, the kings of the earth assembled *
 and marched forward together.

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised.

- 7 As we have heard, so have we seen,
in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God; *
God has established her for ever.
- 8 We have waited in silence on your loving-kindness, O God, *
in the midst of your temple.

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised.

- 9 Your praise, like your Name, O God, reaches to
the world's end; *
your right hand is full of justice.
- 10 Let Mount Zion be glad
and the cities of Judah rejoice, *
because of your judgments.
- 13 This God is our God for ever and ever; *
he shall be our guide for evermore.

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (8:12-19)*

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." Then the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid." Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf." Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

The Gospel of the Lord

John Henry Newman was among the founders of the Oxford Movement and a prolific tractarian, having authored two dozen of the Tracts of the Times, the series of pamphlets setting forth the tenets of the movement. Most notably, Newman is remembered as the author of Tract 90, in which he sought to reconcile the teaching of Roman Catholicism with the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England.

Newman was born in London in 1801 and was educated at Oxford. While a Fellow and Tutor at Oriel College, his evangelical upbringing gave way to a more catholic understanding of the Christian faith. He was ordained in 1826 and within two years became the Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Oxford.

Newman was an avid student of the writings of the early church. Although he could be critical of the teachings of the Roman Church in his day, he was even more troubled by the theological state of the Church of England, particularly when weighed against what he understood to be the standards of the ancient church. His passionate interests in the texts of the early centuries of Christianity led Newman to question the position of Scripture as the unchecked rule and standard of the church's faith. For Newman, Scripture was of critical importance but it could not stand alone; it had to be held in balance with the writings of the early church and the theological tradition of the church through the ages.

Although the other leaders of the Oxford Movement remained loyal to the Anglican tradition, spending their vocations advocating positions similar to his, Newman found it difficult to withstand the furor of the church's infighting, particularly after the publication of Tract 90. In 1845, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church and soon thereafter went to Rome, where he was ordained to the priesthood. He became a member of the Congregation of the Oratory. Upon his return to England he established a house of the Oratory near Birmingham where he lived for the rest of his life.

Although his relationship with the Roman Church in England was at times problematic, Pope Leo XIII made him a Cardinal in 1877. He died on August 11, 1890.

St. Polycarp *February 23*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (2:1-5)

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 121

My help comes from the Lord.

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills; *
from where is my help to come?
- 2 My help comes from the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

My help comes from the Lord.

- 3 He will not let your foot be moved *
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.
- 4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel *
shall neither slumber nor sleep;

My help comes from the Lord.

- 5 The LORD himself watches over you; *
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,
- 6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *
nor the moon by night.

My help comes from the Lord.

- 7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; *
it is he who shall keep you safe.
- 8 The LORD shall watch over your going out and
your coming in, *
from this time forth for evermore.

My help comes from the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (20:20-23)*

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

The Gospel of the Lord

Polycarp was one of the leaders of the Church who carried on the tradition of the apostles through the troubled period of Gnostic heresies in the second century. According to Irenaeus, who had known him in his early youth, Polycarp was a pupil of John, “the disciple of the Lord,” and had been appointed a bishop by “apostles in Asia.”

We possess a letter from Polycarp to the Church in Philippi. It reveals his firm adherence to the faith, and his pastoral concern for fellow Christians in trouble.

An authentic account of the martyrdom of Polycarp on February 23 is also preserved. It probably occurred in the year 156. The account tells of Polycarp’s courageous witness in the amphitheater at Smyrna. When the proconsul asked him to curse Christ, Polycarp said, “Eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” The account reports that the magistrate was reluctant to kill the gentle and harmless old man, but his hand was forced by the mob, who clamored that he be thrown to wild beasts, as was the fate of other Christians on that dreadful day.

Polycarp was burned at the stake. Before his ordeal, he is reported to have looked up to heaven, and to have prayed: “Lord God Almighty, Father of your beloved and blessed child Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of you, God of angels and hosts and all creation, and of the whole race of the upright who live in your presence, I bless you that you have thought me worthy of this day and hour, to be numbered among the martyrs and share in the cup of Christ, for resurrection to eternal life, for soul and body in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. Among them may I be accepted before you today, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice just as you, the faithful and true God, have prepared and foreshown and brought about. For this reason and for all things I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you, through the eternal heavenly high priest Jesus Christ, your beloved child, through whom be glory to you, with him and the Holy Spirit, now and for the ages to come. Amen.”

SAINT MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE *February 24*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (1:15-26)

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, “Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus—for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) “For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his homestead become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it’; and ‘Let another take his position of overseer.’ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.” So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 15

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

- 1 LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle? *
who may abide upon your holy hill?
- 2 Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, *
who speaks the truth from his heart.

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

- 3 There is no guile upon his tongue;
he does no evil to his friend; *
he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor.
- 4 In his sight the wicked is rejected, *
but he honors those who fear the LORD.

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

- 5 He has sworn to do no wrong *
and does not take back his word.
- 6 He does not give his money in hope of gain, *
nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.
- 7 Whoever does these things *
shall never be overthrown.

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (1,6-16)*

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name."

The Gospel of the Lord

In the nine days of waiting between Jesus' Ascension and the Day of Pentecost, the disciples remained together in prayer. During this time, Peter reminded them that the defection and death of Judas had left the fellowship of the Twelve with a vacancy. The Acts of the Apostles records Peter's proposal that "one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection" (Acts 1:21–22). Two men were nominated, Joseph called Barsabbas who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. After prayer, the disciples cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias, who was then enrolled with the eleven.

Nothing further is told of Matthias after his selection. According to tradition he was an exemplary Apostle, but we know nothing more. Matthias seems an appropriate example to Christians of one whose faithful companionship with Jesus qualifies him to be a suitable witness to the resurrection, and whose service is unheralded and unsung.

George Herbert *February 27*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (4:4-9)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; *
 I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures *
 and leads me beside still waters.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

- 3 He revives my soul *
 and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I shall fear no evil; *
 for you are with me;
 your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

- 5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those
who trouble me; *
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (5:1-10)*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

The Gospel of the Lord

George Herbert is famous for his poems and his prose work, *A Priest in the Temple: or The Country Parson*. He is portrayed by his biographer Izaak Walton as a model of the saintly parish priest. Herbert described his poems as “a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could submit mine to the will of Jesus my Master; in whose service I have found perfect freedom.”

Herbert was born in 1593, a member of an ancient family, a cousin of the Earl of Pembroke, and acquainted with King James I and Prince (later King) Charles. Through his official position as Public Orator of Cambridge, he was brought into contact with the Court. Whatever hopes he may have had as a courtier were dimmed, however, because of his associations with persons who were out of favor with King Charles I—principally John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln.

Herbert had begun studying divinity in his early twenties, and in 1626 he took Holy Orders. King Charles provided him with a living as rector of the parishes of Fugglestone and Bemerton in 1630.

His collection of poems, *The Temple*, was given to his friend, Nicholas Ferrar, and published posthumously. Two of his poems are well known hymns: “Teach me, my God and King,” and “Let all the world in every corner sing.” Their grace, strength, and metaphysical imagery influenced later poets, including Henry Vaughan and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Lines from his poem on prayer have moved many readers:

Prayer, the Church’s banquet, Angel’s age,
God’s breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, the heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav’n and earth.

Herbert was unselfish in his devotion and service to others. Izaak Walton writes that many of the parishioners “let their plow rest when Mr. Herbert’s saints-bell rung to prayers, that they might also offer their devotion to God with him.” His words, “Nothing is little in God’s service,” have reminded Christians again and again that everything in daily life, small or great, may be a means of serving and worshiping God.

St. John Cassian *February 29*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (3:1-3)

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 145:1-7

Every day will I bless you, O Lord.

- 1 I will exalt you, O God my King, *
and bless your Name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I bless you *
and praise your Name for ever and ever.

Every day will I bless you, O Lord.

- 3 Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; *
there is no end to his greatness.
- 4 One generation shall praise your works to another *
and shall declare your power.
- 5 I will ponder the glorious splendor of your majesty *
and all your marvelous works.

Every day will I bless you, O Lord.

- 6 They shall speak of the might of your wondrous acts, *
and I will tell of your greatness.
- 7 They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness; *
they shall sing of your righteous deeds.

Every day will I bless you, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (1:1-14)*

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.

The Gospel of the Lord

John Cassian struggled with the problems of living the Christian life in a time when the world seemed to be falling apart. In so doing, he laid the foundations for what would be the spirituality of the Western Church.

Born Romania around 365, Cassian traveled as a young man to a monastery in Bethlehem and later moved to Egypt where he sought the tutelage of the great founders of the ascetic movement of the desert such as Antony and Macarius.

At the heart of desert monasticism was the idea that the image of God in each person, tarnished by sin but not destroyed, yearns to and has the capacity to love God with the purity of heart with which God loves us. Their aim was to rid themselves of the anxieties and distractions that called their attention away from loving God.

Cassian was initiated into this tradition before political pressures forced him to leave Egypt in about 399. He moved to southern Gaul and there founded a house for monks, and later a house for women religious. Though Cassian's goal was, like his desert mentors, the perfection of the individual soul, he insisted that no one should embark on a monastic vocation alone. One should enter a house where other monks are pursuing the same goal, live according to a time-tested rule, and thereby gain the guidance and companionship of the community.

Though Cassian remained committed to the desert ideal of individual perfection, his insistence on the necessity of Christian community and loving moderation was the basis for Benedictine monasticism, which eventually became the basic spirituality of the Western Church. It was perhaps a paradox that only in community could the Christian: "lose sight of earthly things in proportion to the inspiration of its purity so that ... with the inner gaze of the soul it sees the glorified Jesus coming in the splendor of His majesty."

St. David *March 1*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians (2:2b-12)

Though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us. You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 16:5-11

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 5 O LORD, you are my portion and my cup; *
it is you who uphold my lot.
- 6 My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; *
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 7 I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel; *
my heart teaches me, night after night.
- 8 I have set the LORD always before me; *
because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 9 My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; *
my body also shall rest in hope.
- 10 For you will not abandon me to the grave, *
nor let your holy one see the Pit.
- 11 You will show me the path of life; *
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (4:26-29)*

Jesus also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Despite the overwhelming victory of the pagan Angles, Saxons, and Jutes in the fifth century, one part of Britain continued in the ways of Christianity—Wales, the land west of the Wye River. In this last stronghold of the old Britons, the faith sprung from Glastonbury continued to flourish.

To the family of one Sanctus in Menevia there was born a son David (“the beloved”). Little is known of his early life, but while fairly young he founded a monastery, near Menevia and became its abbot. He was later elected bishop. His strongest desire was to study and meditate in the quiet of his monastery, but he was virtually dragged to an assembly of bishops called to combat the heresy of Pelagianism. Once there, David proved to be so eloquent and learned that Archbishop Dubricius chose him as his own successor as Primate of Wales. In time, David founded eleven other monasteries in Wales, and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

He is said to have been strict in the governing of his own monastery at Menevia, yet loving in his treatment and correction of wrongdoers. One of his nicknames, “the Waterman,” may indicate that he allowed the monks in his care to drink only water at meals instead of the customary wine or mead.

A scholar, a competent administrator, and a man of moderation, David filled the offices he held with distinction. He became a leader and guardian of the Christian faith in Wales. Eventually he moved the center of episcopal government to Menevia, which is still an episcopal city, now called Ty-Dewi (House of David).

Some facts of his life can be historically established. Among them is that toward the end of his life he had several Irish saints as his pupils at the monastery. In legend—and many legends surround his life—David is clearly the foremost saint of Wales. He is revered and loved to this day as patron of Wales, foremost Christian priest, and courageous leader.

St. Chad *March 2*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (4:10-13)

I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 95:1-7

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving.

- 1 Come, let us sing to the LORD; *
 let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *
 and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving.

- 3 For the LORD is a great God, *
 and a great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *
 and the heights of the hills are his also.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it, *
 and his hands have molded the dry land.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving.

- 6 Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *
 and kneel before the LORD our Maker.
- 7 For he is our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. *
 Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (14:1,7-14)*

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

The Gospel of the Lord

One of four brothers dedicated to service in the Church, Chad was trained by Aidan of Lindisfarne as a follower of the Celtic tradition in ritual. His elder brother Cedd, a godly and upright man, had built a monastery at Lastingham, where he governed as abbot. At his death, Cedd left the abbacy to Chad. According to the Venerable Bede, Chad was “a holy man, modest in his ways, learned in the Scriptures, and zealous in carrying out their teaching.”

Impressed by Chad’s qualities, the King appointed him Bishop of York. Chad was ordained by “bishops of the British race who had not been canonically ordained,” Bede tells us. Chad was, Bede also notes, “a man who kept the Church in truth and purity, humility, and temperance.” Following apostolic example, he traveled about his diocese on foot.

The new Archbishop of Canterbury, Theodore, arrived in England four years after Chad’s ordination as bishop. Theodore made it clear that Chad’s ordination had been irregular, that is, not according to Roman custom; and Chad most humbly offered to resign from office. “Indeed, I never believed myself worthy of it,” he said.

Theodore, impressed by such humility, reordained him, and appointed him Bishop of Mercia and Northumbria. Chad continued his custom of traveling on foot, until Theodore ordered him to ride, at least on longer journeys. When Chad hesitated, the Archbishop is said to have lifted him bodily onto the horse, “determined to compel him to ride when the need arose.”

Chad administered his new diocese with devout concern. He built a monastery, and established monastic rule at Barrow. In his see city of Lichfield, where he had an official dwelling, he preferred to read and meditate in a small house he had built nearby.

Two and one-half years after his reordination, plague broke out, killing many residents of the diocese including Chad himself, whose death Bede describes thus: “He joyfully beheld ... the day of the Lord, whose coming he had always anxiously awaited. He was mindful to his end of all that the Lord did.” He was buried at the Cathedral Church of St. Peter in Lichfield.

St. Perpetua and Companions *March 7*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (10:32-39)

But recall those earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and persecution, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion for those who were in prison, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting. Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet “in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back.” But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 124

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

- 1 If the LORD had not been on our side, *
let Israel now say;
- 2 If the LORD had not been on our side, *
when enemies rose up against us;

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

- 3 Then would they have swallowed us up alive *
in their fierce anger toward us;
- 4 Then would the waters have overwhelmed us *
and the torrent gone over us;

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

5 Then would the raging waters *
have gone right over us.

6 Blessed be the LORD! *
he has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

7 We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; *
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

8 Our help is in the Name of the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (24:9-14)*

Jesus said, "Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come."

The Gospel of the Lord

Vibia Perpetua was a young widow, mother of an infant and owner of several slaves, including Felicitas and Revocatus. With two other young Carthaginians, Secundulus and Saturninus, they were catechumens preparing for baptism.

Early in the third century, Emperor Septimius Severus decreed that all persons should sacrifice to the divinity of the emperor. There was no way that a Christian, confessing faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, could do this. Perpetua and her companions were arrested and held in prison under miserable conditions.

In a document attributed to Perpetua, we learn of visions she had in prison. One was of a ladder to heaven, which she climbed to reach a large garden; another was of her brother who had died when young of a dreadful disease, but was now well and drinking the water of life; the last was of herself as a warrior battling the Devil and defeating him to win entrance to the gate of life. “And I awoke, understanding that I should fight, not with beasts, but with the Devil ... So much about me up to the day before the games; let him who will write of what happened then.”

At the public hearing before the Proconsul, she refused even the entreaties of her aged father, saying, “I am a Christian.” On March 7, Perpetua and her companions, encouraging one another to bear bravely whatever pain they might suffer, were sent to the arena to be mangled by a leopard, a boar, a bear, and a savage cow. Perpetua and Felicitas, tossed by the cow, were bruised and disheveled, but Perpetua, “lost in spirit and ecstasy,” hardly knew that anything had happened. To her companions she cried, “Stand fast in the faith and love one another. And do not let what we suffer be a stumbling block to you.”

Eventually, all were put to death by a stroke of a sword through the throat. The soldier who struck Perpetua was inept. His first blow merely pierced her throat between the bones. She shrieked with pain, then aided the man to guide the sword properly. The report of her death concludes, “Perhaps so great a woman, feared by the unclean spirit, could not have been killed unless she so willed it.”

St. Gregory of Nyssa *March 9*

A Reading from 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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 19:7-11

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect
and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the LORD is sure
and gives wisdom to the innocent.
- 8 The statutes of the LORD are just
and rejoice the heart; *
the commandment of the LORD is clear
and gives light to the eyes.

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

- 9 The fear of the LORD is clean
and endures for ever; *
the judgments of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold,
more than much fine gold, *
sweeter far than honey,
than honey in the comb.

11 By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (14:23-26)*

Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Gregory was a man enchanted with Christ and dazzled by the meaning of his Passion. He was born in Caesarea about 334, the younger brother of Basil the Great, and, in his youth, was but a reluctant Christian.

When he was twenty, the transfer of the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste to the family chapel at Annesi quickened Gregory's faith, and he became a practicing Christian and a lector. He abandoned this ministry, however, to become a rhetorician like his father.

His brother Basil, in his struggle against the Emperor Valens, compelled Gregory to become Bishop of Nyssa, a town ten miles from Caesarea. Knowing himself to be unfit for the charge, Gregory described his ordination as the most miserable day of his life. He lacked the important episcopal skills of tact and understanding, and had no sense of the value of money. Falsely accused of embezzling Church funds, Gregory went into hiding for two years, not returning to his diocese until Valens died.

Although he resented his brother's dominance, Gregory was shocked by Basil's death in 379. Several months later, he received another shock: his beloved sister Macrina was dying. Gregory hastened to Annesi and conversed with her for two days about death, and the soul, and the meaning of the resurrection. Choking with asthma, Macrina died in her brother's arms.

The two deaths, while stunning Gregory, also freed him to develop as a deeper and richer philosopher and theologian. He reveals his delight in the created order in his treatise, *On the Making of Man*. He exposes the depth of his contemplative and mystical nature in his *Life of Moses* and again in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. His *Great Catechism* is still considered second only to Origen's treatise, *On First Principles*.

In 381, Gregory attended the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople, where he was honored as the "pillar of the Church." In the fight for the Nicene faith, he was one of the three great Eastern theologians, known with Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, as the Cappadocian Fathers.

St. Gregory the Great *March 12*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Colossians (1:28-2:3)

It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me. For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face. I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 57:6-11

I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord.

- 6 Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, *
and your glory over all the earth.
- 7 My heart is firmly fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; *
I will sing and make melody.

I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord.

- 8 Wake up, my spirit;
awake, lute and harp; *
I myself will waken the dawn.
- 9 I will confess you among the peoples, O LORD; *
I will sing praise to you among the nations.

I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord.

- 10 For your loving-kindness is greater than the heavens, *
and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.
- 11 Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, *
and your glory over all the earth.

I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (10:42-45)*

So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Only two Popes, Leo I and Gregory I, have been given the popular title of “the Great.” Both served in the difficult times of the barbarian invasions of Italy. Gregory also knew the horrors of “plague, pestilence, and famine.” He was born of a patrician family about 540, and became Prefect of Rome in 573. Shortly thereafter he retired to a monastic life in a community which he founded in his ancestral home on the Coelian Hill. Pope Pelagius II made him Ambassador to Constantinople in 579, where he learned much about the larger affairs of the Church. Not long after his return home, Pope Pelagius died of the plague, and in 590 Gregory was elected as his successor.

Gregory’s pontificate was one of strenuous activity. He organized the defense of Rome against the attacks of the Lombards, and fed its populace from papal granaries in Sicily. In this as in other matters, he administered “the patrimony of St. Peter” with energy and efficiency. His ordering of the Church’s liturgy and chant has molded the spirituality of the Western Church until the present day. Though unoriginal in theology, his writings provided succeeding generations with basic texts, especially the Pastoral Care, a classic on the work of the ministry.

In the midst of all his cares and duties, Gregory prepared and fostered the evangelizing mission to the Anglo-Saxons under Augustine and other monks from his own monastery. The Venerable Bede justly called Gregory the Apostle of the English.

Gregory died on March 12, 604, and was buried in St. Peter’s basilica. His life was a true witness to the title he assumed for his office: “Servant of the servants of God.”

St. Patrick *March 17*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians (2:2b-12)

But though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us. You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 97:1-2,7-12

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 1 The LORD is King;
 let the earth rejoice; *
 let the multitude of the isles be glad.
- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him, *
 righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 7 Confounded be all who worship carved images
and delight in false gods! *
Bow down before him, all you gods.
- 8 Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, *
because of your judgments, O LORD.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 9 For you are the LORD,
most high over all the earth; *
you are exalted far above all gods.
- 10 The LORD loves those who hate evil; *
he preserves the lives of his saints
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 11 Light has sprung up for the righteous, *
and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.
- 12 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, *
and give thanks to his holy Name.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (28:16-20)*

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The Gospel of the Lord

Patrick was born into a Christian family somewhere on the northwest coast of Britain in about 390. His grandfather had been a Christian priest and his father, Calpornius, a deacon. Calpornius was an important official in the late Roman imperial government of Britain. It was not unusual in this post-Constantinian period for such state officials to be in holy orders. When Patrick was about sixteen, he was captured by a band of Irish slave-raiders. He was carried off to Ireland and forced to serve as a shepherd. When he was about twenty-one, he escaped and returned to Britain, where he was educated as a Christian. He tells us that he took holy orders as both presbyter and bishop, although no particular see is known as his at this time. A vision then called him to return to Ireland. This he did about the year 431.

Tradition holds that Patrick landed not far from the place of his earlier captivity, near what is now known as Downpatrick (a “down” or “dun” is a fortified hill, the stronghold of a local Irish king). He then began a remarkable process of missionary conversion throughout the country that continued until his death, probably in 461. He made his appeal to the local kings and through them to their tribes. Christianizing the old pagan religion as he went, Patrick erected Christian churches over sites already regarded as sacred, had crosses carved on old druidic pillars, and put sacred wells and springs under the protection of Christian saints.

Many legends of Patrick’s Irish missionary travels possess substrata of truth, especially those telling of his conversion of the three major Irish High Kings. At Armagh, he is said to have established his principal church. To this day, Armagh is regarded as the primatial see of all Ireland.

Two works are attributed to Patrick: an autobiographical Confession, in which he tells us, among other things, that he was criticized by his contemporaries for lack of learning, and a Letter to Coroticus, a British chieftain. The *Lorica* or St. Patrick’s Breastplate (“I bind unto myself today”) is probably not his, but it expresses his faith and zeal.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem *March 18*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (13:14-21)

For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with sighing—for that would be harmful to you. Pray for us; we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you very soon. Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 122

Let us go to the house of the Lord.

- 1 I was glad when they said to me, *
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”
- 2 Now our feet are standing *
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Let us go to the house of the Lord.

- 3 Jerusalem is built as a city *
that is at unity with itself;
- 4 To which the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD, *
the assembly of Israel,
to praise the Name of the LORD.

Let us go to the house of the Lord.

5 For there are the thrones of judgment, *
the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: *
“May they prosper who love you.

7 Peace be within your walls *
and quietness within your towers.

Let us go to the house of the Lord.

8 For my brethren and companions’ sake, *
I pray for your prosperity.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God, *
I will seek to do you good.”

Let us go to the house of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (24:44-48)*

Then Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Cyril is the one we have most to thank for the development of catechetical instruction and liturgical observances during Lent and Holy Week. Born in Jerusalem about 315, Cyril became bishop of that city probably in 349. In the course of political and ecclesiastical disputes, he was banished and restored three times. His Catechetical Lectures on the Christian faith, given before Easter to candidates for Baptism, were probably written by him sometime between 348 and 350.

The work consists of an introductory lecture, or Procatechesis, and eighteen Catecheses based upon the articles of the creed of the Church at Jerusalem. All these lectures (the earliest catechetical materials surviving today) may have been used many times over by Cyril and his successors, and considerably revised in the process. They were probably part of the pre-baptismal instruction that Egeria, a pilgrim nun from western Europe, witnessed at Jerusalem in the fourth century and described with great enthusiasm in the account of her pilgrimage. Many of the faithful would also attend these instructions.

Cyril's five Mystagogical Catecheses on the Sacraments, intended for the newly baptized after Easter, are now thought to have been composed, or at least revised, by John, Cyril's successor as Bishop of Jerusalem from 386 to 417.

It is likely that it was Cyril who instituted the observances of Palm Sunday and Holy Week during the latter years of his episcopate in Jerusalem. In doing so, he was taking practical steps to organize devotions for countless pilgrims and local inhabitants around the sacred sites. In time, as pilgrims returned to their homes from Palestine, these services were to influence the development of Holy Week observances throughout the entire Church. Cyril attended the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople, in 381, and died at Jerusalem on March 18, 386.

Cyril's thought has greatly enriched the observance of Holy Week in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.

SAINT JOSEPH *March 19*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (4:13-18)

For 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.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 89:1-4, 26-29

You love, O Lord, for ever will I sing.

- 1 Your love, O LORD, for ever will I sing; *
from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.
- 2 For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever; *
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.

You love, O Lord, for ever will I sing.

- 3 “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; *
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
- 4 ‘I will establish your line for ever, *
and preserve your throne for all generations.’”

You love, O Lord, for ever will I sing.

- 26 He will say to me, ‘You are my Father, *
my God, and the rock of my salvation.’
27 I will make him my firstborn *
and higher than the kings of the earth.

You love, O Lord, for ever will I sing.

- 28 I will keep my love for him for ever, *
and my covenant will stand firm for him.
29 I will establish his line for ever *
and his throne as the days of heaven.”

You love, O Lord, for ever will I sing.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (2:41-52)*

Now every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.” He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

The Gospel of the Lord

In the face of circumstances that distressed even a man of such tenderness and obedience to God as Joseph, he accepted the vocation of protecting Mary and being a father to Jesus. He is honored in Christian tradition for the nurturing care and protection he provided for the infant Jesus and his mother in taking them to Egypt to escape Herod's slaughter of the innocents, and in rearing him as a faithful Jew at Nazareth. The Gospel according to Matthew pictures Joseph as a man of deep devotion, open to mystical experiences, and as a man of compassion, who accepted his God-given responsibility with gentleness and humility.

Joseph was a pious Jew, a descendant of David, and a carpenter by trade. As Joseph the Carpenter, he is considered the patron saint of the working man, one who not only worked with his hands, but taught his trade to Jesus. The little that is told of him is a testimony to the trust in God which values simple everyday duties, and gives an example of a loving husband and father.

St. Cuthbert *March 20*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (12:6-13)

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 104:32-35

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 32 May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; *
 may the LORD rejoice in all his works.
- 33 He looks at the earth and it trembles; *
 he touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 34 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; *
 I will praise my God while I have my being.
- 35 May these words of mine please him; *
 I will rejoice in the LORD.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (10:25b-30)*

Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Cuthbert was the most popular saint of the pre-Conquest Anglo Saxon Church. He was born about 625. In response to a vision of the death of Aidan of Lindisfarne, Cuthbert entered religious life and was formed in the austere traditions of Celtic monasticism. He was Prior of Melrose Abbey from 651-664 and was then Prior of Lindisfarne. Made Bishop of Hexham in 684, Cuthbert continued to live in Lindisfarne. He died at his hermitage on March 20, 687.

Cuthbert accepted the decisions of the Synod of Whitby in 663 that brought the usages of the English Church in line with Roman practice. He was, therefore, a “healer of the breach” that threatened to divide the church into Celtic and Roman factions.

Thomas Ken *March 21*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (4:4-9)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 145:8-13

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

- 8 The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, *
 slow to anger and of great kindness.
- 9 The LORD is loving to everyone *
 and his compassion is over all his works.

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

- 10 All your works praise you, O LORD, *
 and your faithful servants bless you.
- 11 They make known the glory of your kingdom *
 and speak of your power;

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

- 12 That the peoples may know of your power *
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
- 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; *
your dominion endures throughout all ages.

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (6:17-23)*

Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them. Then he looked up at his disciples and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

The Gospel of the Lord

Thomas Ken was born in 1637. Throughout his life he was both rewarded and punished for his integrity. His close relationship with the royal family began when he became chaplain to Princess Mary of Orange at The Hague. Ken was appalled at the Prince of Orange's treatment of his wife, and rebuked him publicly.

In 1683, Ken returned to England and became chaplain to Charles II. His integrity stirred him to rebuke Charles for lax behavior. When Ken was notified that the King's mistress, the actress Nell Gwyn, was to be lodged at his house, he refused, saying, "a woman of ill-repute ought not to be endured in the house of a clergyman, and especially the King's chaplain." The King took no offense, but in the next year made Ken the Bishop of Bath and Wells, declaring that none should have the position except "the little black fellow that refused his lodging to poor Nelly."

In 1688, when Charles' successor, James II, tried to undermine the authority of the Church of England, Ken was one of seven bishops who refused to read the King's Declaration of Indulgence, which offered toleration to Protestant non-conformists and to Roman Catholics. The seven bishops were sent to the Tower, but were acquitted in the courts, and became popular heroes. After the resolution of 1688, however, Ken's conscience did not permit him to swear allegiance to William of Orange, who became King William III. As a Non-Juror, Ken was deprived of his see.

Ken's conscience would not let him rest and his disagreement with others of the "Non-Juring" party over various matters troubled him for the rest of his life. He deplored the Non-Juror schism, and after the accession of Queen Anne, he made his peace with the Church of England.

A man of deep piety, Ken was the author of several religious works which were immensely popular in the eighteenth century. He is best known as a writer of hymns, particularly the well-known evening hymn, "All praise to thee, my God, this night," which concludes with his doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

James DeKoven *March 22*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (2:10-15,19)

Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself. Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 103:1-2,13-18

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

- 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
 and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.
- 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
 and forget not all his benefits.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

- 13 As a father cares for his children, *
 so does the LORD care for those who fear him.
- 14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; *
 he remembers that we are but dust.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

- 15 Our days are like the grass; *
we flourish like a flower of the field;
16 When the wind goes over it, it is gone, *
and its place shall know it no more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

- 17 But the merciful goodness of the LORD endures for ever
on those who fear him, *
and his righteousness on children's children;
18 On those who keep his covenant *
and remember his commandments and do them.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (13:47-52)*

Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

The Gospel of the Lord

James De Koven was born in Middletown, Connecticut, in 1831, ordained by Bishop Kemper in 1855, and appointed professor of ecclesiastical history at Nashotah House. In addition, he administered a preparatory school, and assisted at the Church of St. John Chrysostom in Delafield, Wisconsin.

Nashotah House was associated, from the time of its foundation, with many of the principles of the Oxford Movement, above all in its emphasis on the sacramental life of the Church and the expression of devotion to the Eucharist—including such practices as bowing to the Altar, at the name of Jesus, and before receiving Communion. In 1859, De Koven became Warden of the Church college at Racine, Wisconsin, where he emphasized the life of worship. He died there in 1879.

De Koven came to national attention at the General Conventions of 1871 and 1874, when the controversy over “ritualism” was at its height. In 1871, he asserted that the use of candles on the Altar, incense, and genuflections were lawful, because they symbolized “the real, spiritual presence of Christ” which the Episcopal Church upheld, along with the Orthodox and the Lutherans. He cited a recent decision of an ecclesiastical court of the Church of England, which affirmed as the teaching of the Church of England that “the spiritual presence of the Body and Blood of our Lord in the Holy Communion is objective and real.”

Because of his advocacy of the “ritualist” cause, consents were not given to his consecration as Bishop of Wisconsin in 1874, and of Illinois in 1875.

To the General Convention of 1874, De Koven expressed the religious conviction that underlay his Churchmanship: “You may take away from us, if you will, every external ceremony; you may take away altars, and super-altars, lights and incense and vestments; ... and we will submit to you. But, gentlemen ... to adore Christ’s Person in his Sacrament—that is the inalienable privilege of every Christian and Catholic heart. How we do it, the way we do it, the ceremonies with which we do it, are utterly, utterly, indifferent. The thing itself is what we plead for.”

St. Gregory the Illuminator *March 23*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (17:22-31)

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 119:153-160

Great is your compassion, O Lord.

153 Behold my affliction and deliver me, *
for I do not forget your law.

154 Plead my cause and redeem me; *
according to your promise, give me life.

Great is your compassion, O Lord.

155 Deliverance is far from the wicked, *
for they do not study your statutes.

156 Great is your compassion, O LORD; *
preserve my life, according to your judgments.

Great is your compassion, O Lord.

157 There are many who persecute and oppress me, *
yet I have not swerved from your decrees.

158 I look with loathing at the faithless, *
for they have not kept your word.

Great is your compassion, O Lord.

159 See how I love your commandments! *
O LORD, in your mercy, preserve me.

160 The heart of your word is truth; *
all your righteous judgments endure for evermore.

Great is your compassion, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (5:11-16)*

Jesus said, "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord

Armenia was the first nation-state to become officially Christian, and this set a precedent for the adoption of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine. As a buffer state between the more powerful empires of Rome and Persia, Armenia endured many shifts of policy, as first one and then the other empire took it “under protection.”

The accounts of Gregory, known as the Illuminator and as Apostle of the Armenians, are a mixture of legend and fact. He was born about 257. After his father assassinated the Persian King Chosroes I, the infant boy was rescued and taken to Caesarea in Cappadocia, where he was brought up as a Christian. He married a woman named Mary, who bore him two sons. About 280, he returned to Armenia, and succeeded, after experiencing various fortunes of honor and imprisonment, in converting King Tiridates to his faith. With the help of the King the country was Christianized, and paganism was rooted out. About 300, Gregory was ordained a bishop at Caesarea. He established his cathedral at Valarshapat, with his center of work nearby at Echmiadzin, now in Armenia, and still the spiritual center of Armenian Christianity.

There is no record that Gregory attended the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325, but a tradition records that he sent in his stead his younger son Aristages, whom he ordained as his successor. His last years were spent in solitude, and he died about 332.

ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST *March 25*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (10:5-10)

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’ (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).” When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 40:5-10

How great are your wonders, O Lord.

- 5 Great things are they that you have done, O LORD my God!
how great your wonders and your plans for us! *
there is none who can be compared with you.
- 6 Oh, that I could make them known and tell them! *
but they are more than I can count.

How great are your wonders, O Lord.

- 7 In sacrifice and offering you take no pleasure *
(you have given me ears to hear you);
- 8 Burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required, *
and so I said, “Behold, I come.

How great are your wonders, O Lord.

- 9 In the roll of the book it is written concerning me: *
‘I love to do your will, O my God;
your law is deep in my heart.’”
- 10 I proclaimed righteousness in the great congregation; *
behold, I did not restrain my lips;
and that, O LORD, you know.

How great are your wonders, O Lord.

✠ *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 engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord

Today's feast commemorates how God made known to a young Jewish woman that she was to be the mother of his Son, and how Mary accepted her vocation with perfect conformity of will. It has been said, "God made us without us, and redeemed us without us, but cannot save us without us." Mary's assent to Gabriel's message opened the way for God to accomplish the salvation of the world. It is for this reason that all generations are to call her "blessed."

The Annunciation has been a major theme in Christian art, in both East and West. Innumerable sermons and poems have been composed about it. The term coined by Cyril of Alexandria for the Blessed Virgin, Theotokos ("the God-bearer"), was affirmed by the General Council of Ephesus in 431.

Mary's self-offering in response to God's call has been compared to that of Abraham, the father of believers. Just as Abraham was called to be the father of the chosen people, and accepted his call, so Mary was called to be the mother of the faithful, the new Israel. She is God's human agent in the mystery of the Incarnation. Her response to the angel, "Let it be to me according to your word," is identical with the faith expressed in the prayer that Jesus taught, "Your will be done on earth as in heaven."

Gerard Manley Hopkins, comparing Mary to the air we breathe, writes:

Wild air, world-mothering air ...
Of her flesh he took flesh:
He does take fresh and fresh,
Though much the mystery how,
Not flesh but spirit now,
And makes, O marvellous!
New Nazareths in us,
Where she shall yet conceive
Him, morning, noon, and eve,
New Bethlems, and he born
There, evening, noon, and morn—

John Keble *March 29*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (12:9-21)

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 26:1-8

Lord, I love the house in which you dwell.

- 1 Give judgment for me, O LORD,
for I have lived with integrity; *
I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.
- 2 Test me, O LORD, and try me; *
examine my heart and my mind.

Lord, I love the house in which you dwell.

- 3 For your love is before my eyes; *
I have walked faithfully with you.
- 4 I have not sat with the worthless, *
nor do I consort with the deceitful.

Lord, I love the house in which you dwell.

- 5 I have hated the company of evildoers; *
I will not sit down with the wicked.
- 6 I will wash my hands in innocence, O LORD, *
that I may go in procession round your altar,
Lord, I love the house in which you dwell.
- 7 Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving *
and recounting all your wonderful deeds.
- 8 LORD, I love the house in which you dwell *
and the place where your glory abides.
Lord, I love the house in which you dwell.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (5:1-12)*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The Gospel of the Lord

New ev'ry morning is the love
Our wakening and uprising prove:
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life and power and thought.

These familiar words of John Keble are from his cycle of poems entitled *The Christian Year* (1827), which he wrote to restore among Anglicans a deep feeling for the Church Year. The work went through ninety-five editions, but this was not the fame he sought: his consuming desire was to be a faithful pastor, who finds his fulfillment in daily services, confirmation classes, visits to village schools, and a voluminous correspondence with those seeking spiritual counsel.

Keble, born in 1792, received his early education in his father's vicarage. At fourteen, he won a scholarship to Oxford and graduated in 1811 with highest honors. He served the University in several capacities, including ten years as Professor of Poetry. After ordination in 1816 he had a series of rural curacies, and finally settled in 1836 into a thirty-year pastorate at the village of Hursley, near Winchester.

England was going through a turbulent change from a rural to an industrial and urban society. Among the reforms of the 1830's, Parliament acted to abolish ten Anglican bishoprics in Ireland. Keble vigorously attacked this action as undermining the independence of the Church.

His Assize Sermon of 1833 was the spark that ignited the Oxford Movement. Those drawn to the Movement began to publish a series of "Tracts for the Times" (hence the popular name "Tractarians")—which sought to recall the Church to its ancient sacramental heritage. John Henry Newman was the intellectual leader of the Movement, Edward Bouverie Pusey was the prophet of its devotional life, and John Keble was its pastoral inspiration.

Though bitterly attacked, his loyalty to his Church was unwavering. Within three years of his death at age 74, a college bearing his name was established at Oxford "to give an education in strict fidelity to the Church of England." For Keble, this would have meant dedication to learning in order "to live more nearly as we pray."

John Donne *March 31*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (15:20-28)

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 27:5-11

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

- 5 One thing have I asked of the LORD;
 one thing I seek; *
 that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days
 of my life;
- 6 To behold the fair beauty of the LORD *
 and to seek him in his temple.

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

- 7 For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe
in his shelter; *
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling
and set me high upon a rock.
- 8 Even now he lifts up my head *
above my enemies round about me.

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

- 9 Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation
with sounds of great gladness; *
I will sing and make music to the LORD.
- 10 Hearken to my voice, O LORD, when I call; *
have mercy on me and answer me.
- 11 You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." *
Your face, LORD, will I seek.

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (5:19-24)*

Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes. The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.

The Gospel of the Lord

“Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls: It tolls for thee.”

These words are familiar to many; their author, John Donne, though less well known, is one of the greatest of English poets. In his own time, he was the best-known preacher in the Church of England. He came to that eminence by a tortuous path. Born into a wealthy and pious Roman Catholic family in 1573, he was educated at both Oxford and Cambridge, and studied law at Lincoln’s Inn. Some time later he conformed to the Established Church and embarked upon a promising political career of service to the State. The revelation of his secret marriage in 1601 to the niece of his employer, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, brought his public career to an end. In 1615, he was persuaded by King James I and others to receive ordination. Following several brief cures, Donne rose rapidly in popularity as Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, from 1622 until his death. He drew great throngs to the Cathedral and to Paul’s Cross, a nearby open-air pulpit. His sermons reflect the wide learning of the scholar, the passionate intensity of the poet, and the profound devotion of one struggling in his own life to relate the freedom and demands of the Gospel to the concerns of a common humanity, on every level, and in all its complexities.

In one of his poems, he wrote:

We thinke that Paradise and Calvarie,
Christs Crosse, and Adams tree, stood in one place;
Looke, Lord, and finde both Adams met in me;
As the first Adams sweat surrounds my face
May the last Adams blood my soule embrace.
So, in his purple wrapp’d receive mee Lord,
By these his thornes give me his other Crowne;
And as to others soules I preach’d thy word,
Be this my Text, my Sermon to my owne.
Therefore that he may raise the Lord throws down.

St. Richard of Chichester *April 3*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (4:10-13)

I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 119:161-168

I have hoped for your salvation, O Lord.

161 Rulers have persecuted me without a cause, *
but my heart stands in awe of your word.

162 I am as glad because of your promise *
as one who finds great spoils.

I have hoped for your salvation, O Lord.

163 As for lies, I hate and abhor them, *
but your law is my love.

164 Seven times a day do I praise you, *
because of your righteous judgments.

I have hoped for your salvation, O Lord.

165 Great peace have they who love your law; *
for them there is no stumbling block.

166 I have hoped for your salvation, O LORD, *
and have fulfilled your commandments.

I have hoped for your salvation, O Lord.

167 I have kept your decrees *
and I have loved them deeply.

168 I have kept your commandments and decrees, *
for all my ways are before you.

I have hoped for your salvation, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (25:31-40)*

Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

The Gospel of the Lord

Richard and his older brother Robert were quite young when their parents died, leaving a rich estate with a guardian to manage it. The guardian allowed the estate to dwindle, and Richard worked long hours to restore it.

Pressure was put on Richard to marry, but he, who from earliest years had preferred books to almost anything else, turned the estate over to his brother and went to Oxford. Often hungry, cold, and not always sure of his next day's keep, Richard managed to succeed in his studies under such teachers as Robert Grosseteste.

He continued to study law at Paris and Bologna, earned a doctorate, and returned to Oxford to become University Chancellor. Shortly afterward, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund Rich, appointed him to be his own chancellor. The friendship between the primate and his young assistant was close: Richard also became his biographer. Conflict with King Henry III eventually forced Archbishop Rich into exile in France, where Richard nursed him in his final illness. After the Archbishop's death, Richard moved to the Dominican house at Orleans for further study and teaching. He was ordained priest in 1243.

He then returned to England, and was elected Bishop of Chichester in 1244. King Henry opposed the election, confiscated all the revenues of the diocese, and even locked Richard out of the episcopal dwelling. Richard was given lodging by a priest, Simon of Tarring. During these years he functioned as a missionary bishop, traveling about the diocese on foot, visiting fishermen and farmers, holding synods with great difficulty, and endeavoring to establish order. Threatened by the Pope, Henry finally acknowledged Richard as Bishop in 1246.

For eight years, he served his diocese as preacher, confessor, teacher, and counselor. While campaigning in 1253, for a new crusade against the Saracens, he contracted a fatal fever. Nine years after his death, he was canonized. His best remembered words are:

Dear Lord, of thee three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly,
Love thee more dearly,
Follow thee more nearly.

Martin Luther King, Jr. *April 4 (see also January 15)*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (6:10-20)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

The Word of the Lord

Psalms 77:11-16, 19-20

I will remember the works of the Lord.

- 11 I will remember the works of the LORD, *
and call to mind your wonders of old time.
12 I will meditate on all your acts *
and ponder your mighty deeds.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

- 13 Your way, O God, is holy; *
who is so great a god as our God?
14 You are the God who works wonders *
and have declared your power among the peoples.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

15 By your strength you have redeemed your people, *
the children of Jacob and Joseph.

16 The waters saw you, O God;
the waters saw you and trembled; *
the very depths were shaken.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

19 Your way was in the sea,
and your paths in the great waters, *
yet your footsteps were not seen.

20 You led your people like a flock *
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (6:27-36)*

Jesus said, "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you." "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

The Gospel of the Lord

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta. As the son and grandson of Baptist preachers, he was steeped in the Black Church tradition. To this heritage he added a thorough academic preparation, earning the degrees of B.A., B.D., and Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University.

In 1954, King became pastor of a church in Montgomery, Alabama. There, Black indignation at inhumane treatment on segregated buses culminated in December, 1955, in the arrest of Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her seat to a white man. King was catapulted into national prominence as the leader of the Montgomery bus boycott. He became increasingly the articulate prophet, who could not only rally the Black masses, but could also move the consciences of Whites.

King founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to spearhead non-violent mass demonstrations against racism. Many confrontations followed, most notably in Birmingham and Selma, Alabama, and in Chicago. King's campaigns were instrumental to the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 1965 and 1968. King then turned his attention to economic empowerment of the poor and opposition to the Vietnam War, contending that racism, poverty and militarism were interrelated.

King lived in constant danger: his home was dynamited, he was almost fatally stabbed, and he was harassed by death threats. He was even jailed 30 times; but through it all he was sustained by his deep faith. In 1957, he received, late at night, a vicious telephone threat. Alone in his kitchen he wept and prayed. He relates that he heard the Lord speaking to him and saying, "Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness, stand up for justice," and promising never to leave him alone—"No, never alone." King refers to his vision as his "Mountaintop Experience."

After preaching at Washington Cathedral on March 31, 1968, King went to Memphis in support of sanitation workers in their struggle for better wages. There, he proclaimed that he had been "to the mountain-top" and had seen "the Promised Land," and that he knew that one day he and his people would be "free at last." On the following day, April 4, he was cut down by an assassin's bullet.

William Augustus Muhlenberg *April 8*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (4:11-16)

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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 84:1-6

Happy are they whose strength is in the Lord.

- 1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD of hosts! *
My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of
the LORD;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- 2 The sparrow has found her a house
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *
by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts,
my King and my God.

Happy are they whose strength is in the Lord.

- 3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! *
they will always be praising you.
- 4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! *
whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

Happy are they whose strength is in the Lord.

- 5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find
it a place of springs, *
for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.
- 6 They will climb from height to height, *
and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.

Happy are they whose strength is in the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (21:12-16)*

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a den of robbers." The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became angry and said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself?'"

The Gospel of the Lord

William Augustus Muhlenberg was born in Philadelphia in 1796, into a prominent German Lutheran family, and was drawn to the Episcopal Church by its use of English. He deliberately chose to remain unmarried to free himself for a variety of ministries. He was deeply involved in the Sunday School movement, and was concerned that the church should minister to all social groups. Aware of the limitations of the hymnody of his time, he wrote hymns and compiled hymnals, thus widening the range of music in Episcopal churches.

The use of music, flowers, and color, and the emphasis on the church year in worship became a potent influence. In 1846, he founded the Church of the Holy Communion in New York City. Again he was bold and innovative: free pews for everyone, a parish school, a parish unemployment fund, and trips to the country for poor city children. His conception of beauty in worship, vivid and symbolic, had at its heart the Holy Communion itself, celebrated every Sunday. Many of his principles are set forth in the Muhlenberg Memorial to General Convention in 1853.

Anne Ayres was born in London, England, in 1816, and immigrated to New York in 1836. She began work as a tutor for the children of wealthy New Yorkers, but soon came under the influence of Muhlenberg. She took religious vows on November 1, 1845, and was the founder and First Sister of the Sisterhood of the Holy Communion, the first Anglican religious order for women in North America. The House of the Bishops of the Episcopal Church formally recognized the Sisterhood in 1852.

The companionship in ministry between Muhlenberg and Ayres led to the founding of St. Luke's Hospital in the City of New York, where Ayres and her sisters looked after most of the patient care and nursing. They also cooperated in establishing St. Johnland on the north shore of Long Island, an attempt to transplant families into an intentional Christian community far from the urban squalor of late nineteenth century New York City.

William Law *April 9*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (3:7-14)

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord

Psalms 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

- 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.
- 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
and forget not all his benefits.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

- 13 As a father cares for his children, *
so does the LORD care for those who fear him.
- 14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; *
he remembers that we are but dust.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

- 17 But the merciful goodness of the LORD endures for ever
on those who fear him, *
and his righteousness on children's children;
- 18 On those who keep his covenant *
and remember his commandments and do them.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (6:1-6,16-21)*

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Gospel of the Lord

“If we are to follow Christ, it must be in our common way of spending every day. If we are to live unto God at any time or in any place, we are to live unto him in all times and in all places. If we are to use anything as the gift of God, we are to use everything as his gift.” So wrote William Law in 1728 in *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*.

This quiet schoolmaster of Putney, England, could hardly be considered a revolutionary, yet his book had near-revolutionary repercussions. His challenge to take Christian living very seriously received more enthusiastic response than he could ever have imagined, especially in the lives of Henry Venn, George Whitefield, and John Wesley, all of whom he strongly influenced. More than any other man, William Law laid the foundation for the religious revival of the eighteenth century, the Evangelical Movement in England, and the Great Awakening in America.

Law came to typify the devout parson in the eyes of many. His life was characterized by simplicity, devotion, and works of charity. Because he was a Non-Juror, who refused to swear allegiance to the House of Hanover, he was deprived of the usual means of making a living as a clergyman in the Church of England. He therefore worked as a tutor to the father of Edward Gibbon, the historian, from 1727 to 1737. He organized schools and homes for the poor. He stoutly defended the Sacraments and Scriptures against attacks of the Deists. He spoke out eloquently against the warfare of his day. His richly inspired sermons and writings have gained him a permanent place in Christian literature.

St. Alphege of Canterbury *April 19*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to Philemon (1-9a)

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother. For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 49:1-8

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

- 1 Hear this, all you peoples;
hearken, all you who dwell in the world, *
you of high degree and low, rich and poor together.
- 2 My mouth shall speak of wisdom, *
and my heart shall meditate on understanding.

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

- 3 I will incline my ear to a proverb *
and set forth my riddle upon the harp.
- 4 Why should I be afraid in evil days, *
when the wickedness of those at my heels surrounds me,

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

5 The wickedness of those who put their trust in their goods, *
and boast of their great riches?

6 We can never ransom ourselves, *
or deliver to God the price of our life;

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

7 For the ransom of our life is so great, *
that we should never have enough to pay it,

8 In order to live for ever and ever, *
and never see the grave.

My mouth shall speak of wisdom.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (23:1-9)*

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king." Then Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He answered, "You say so." Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for an accusation against this man." But they were insistent and said, "He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place." When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer.

The Gospel of the Lord

Born in 954, Alphege (or Aelfheah) gave his witness in the troubled time of the second wave of Scandinavian invasion and settlement in England. After serving as a monk at Deerhurst, and then as Abbot of Bath, he became in 984, through Archbishop Dunstan's influence, Bishop of Winchester. He was instrumental in bringing the Norse King Olaf Tryggvason, only recently baptized, to King Aethelred in 994 to make his peace and to be confirmed at Andover.

Transferred to Canterbury in 1005, Alphege was captured by the Danes in 1011. He refused to allow a personal ransom to be collected from his already over-burdened people. Seven months later he was brutally murdered, despite the Viking commander Thorkell's effort to save him by offering all his possessions except his ship for the Archbishop's life.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle relates that the Danes were "much stirred against the Bishop, because he would not promise them any fee, and forbade that any man should give anything for him. They were also much drunken ... and took the Bishop, and led him to their hustings, on the eve of the Saturday after Easter ... and then they shamefully killed him. They overwhelmed him with bones and horns of oxen; and one of them smote him with an axe-iron on the head; so that he sunk downwards with the blow. And his holy blood fell on the earth, whilst his sacred soul was sent to the realm of God."

St. Anselm of Canterbury *April 21*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (5:1-11)

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 53

God will restore the fortunes of his people.

- 1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." *
All are corrupt and commit abominable acts;
there is none who does any good.
- 2 God looks down from heaven upon us all, *
to see if there is any who is wise,
if there is one who seeks after God.

God will restore the fortunes of his people.

- 3 Every one has proved faithless;
all alike have turned bad; *
there is none who does good; no, not one.
- 4 Have they no knowledge, those evildoers *
who eat up my people like bread
and do not call upon God?

God will restore the fortunes of his people.

- 5 See how greatly they tremble,
such trembling as never was; *
for God has scattered the bones of the enemy;
they are put to shame, because God has rejected them.
- 6 Oh, that Israel's deliverance would come out of Zion! *
when God restores the fortunes of his people
Jacob will rejoice and Israel be glad.

God will restore the fortunes of his people.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (11:25-30)*

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The Gospel of the Lord

Anselm was born in Italy about 1033, and took monastic vows in 1060 at the Abbey of Bec in Normandy. He succeeded his teacher Lanfranc as Prior of Bec in 1063, and as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. His episcopate was stormy, in continual conflict with the crown over the rights and freedom of the Church. His greatest talent lay in theology and spiritual direction.

As a pioneer in the scholastic method, Anselm remains the great exponent of the so-called “ontological argument” for the existence of God: God is “that than which nothing greater can be thought.” Even the fool, who (in Psalm 14) says in his heart “There is no God,” must have an idea of God in his mind, the concept of an unconditional being (ontos) than which nothing greater can be conceived; otherwise he would not be able to speak of “God” at all. And so this something, “God,” must exist outside the mind as well; because, if he did not, he would not in fact be that than which nothing greater can be thought. Since the greatest thing that can be thought must have existence as one of its properties, Anselm asserts, “God” can be said to exist in reality as well as in the intellect, but is not dependent upon the material world for verification. To some, this “ontological argument” has seemed mere deductive rationalism; to others it has the merit of showing that faith in God need not be contrary to human reason.

Anselm is also the most famous exponent of the “satisfaction theory” of the atonement. Anselm explains the work of Christ in terms of the feudal society of his day. If a vassal breaks his bond, he has to atone for this to his lord; likewise, sin violates a person’s bond with God, the supreme Lord, and atonement or satisfaction must be made. Of ourselves, we are unable to make such atonement, because God is perfect and we are not. Therefore, God himself has saved us, becoming perfect man in Christ, so that a perfect life could be offered in satisfaction for sin.

Undergirding Anselm’s theology is a profound piety. His spirituality is best summarized in the phrase, “faith seeking understanding.” He writes, “I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order that I may understand. For this, too, I believe, that unless I first believe, I shall not understand.”

St. George *April 23*

A Reading from the Book of Revelation (12:7-12)

And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 3

Rise up, O Lord, and set me free.

- 1 LORD, how many adversaries I have! *
how many there are who rise up against me!
- 2 How many there are who say of me, *
“There is no help for him in his God.”

Rise up, O Lord, and set me free.

- 3 But you, O LORD, are a shield about me; *
you are my glory, the one who lifts up my head.
- 4 I call aloud upon the LORD, *
and he answers me from his holy hill;

Rise up, O Lord, and set me free.

5 I lie down and go to sleep; *
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.

6 I do not fear the multitudes of people *
who set themselves against me all around.

Rise up, O Lord, and set me free.

7 Rise up, O LORD; set me free, O my God; *
surely, you will strike all my enemies across the face,
you will break the teeth of the wicked.

8 Deliverance belongs to the LORD. *
Your blessing be upon your people!

Rise up, O Lord, and set me free.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (8:21-29)*

Again Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.” Then the Jews said, “Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come?’” He said to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.” They said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Why do I speak to you at all? I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.”

The Gospel of the Lord

George is the patron saint of England by declaration of King Edward II in 1347. He is remembered as a martyr, having given his life in witness to the gospel during the persecution of the church in the early fourth century. Very few details of his life have survived and his story is replete with legend. By the middle of the fifth century he was commemorated in local calendars and historical records of the period.

George was a soldier by vocation, serving as an officer in the Roman army. It is said that he “gave his goods to the poor, and openly confessed Christianity before the court.”

George’s initial notoriety may well have resulted from his faithfulness and witness to Christ during the Diocletian persecutions, 303-304, a particularly destructive period through which the church suffered.

Much of the legend of George dates back only to the eighth century, and more of it developed in the centuries that followed. The infamous story of George slaying the dragon, probably developed from Greek mythology, is not associated with him until the twelfth century. The inclusion of George’s story in the thirteenth century manuscript, *The Golden Legend*, accounts for his growing popularity in the Middle Ages.

In the twelfth century George was recognized as the patron saint of soldiers and he was called upon in support of those who would fight in the Crusades. The shield under which his soldier’s fought became a symbol of national pride for the English and in time was adapted into the national flag. Interestingly, the “St. George’s Shield”—white shield emblazoned with a red cross—is the basis of the Episcopal Church flag and seal.

SAINT MARK THE EVANGELIST *April 25*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (4:7-8,11-16)

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." 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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 2:1-2,6-8,10

Happy are they who take refuge in the Lord.

- 1 Why are the nations in an uproar? *
Why do the peoples mutter empty threats?
- 2 Why do the kings of the earth rise up in revolt,
and the princes plot together, *
against the LORD and against his Anointed?

Happy are they who take refuge in the Lord.

- 6 "I myself have set my king *
upon my holy hill of Zion."
- 7 Let me announce the decree of the LORD: *
he said to me, "You are my Son;
this day have I begotten you.

Happy are they who take refuge in the Lord.

- 8 Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for
your inheritance *
and the ends of the earth for your possession.
- 10 And now, you kings, be wise; *
be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Happy are they who take refuge in the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (1:1-15)*

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’” John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

The Gospel of the Lord

A disciple of Jesus, named Mark, appears in several places in the New Testament. If all references to Mark can be accepted as referring to the same person, we learn that he was the son of a woman who owned a house in Jerusalem, perhaps the same house in which Jesus ate the Last Supper with his disciples. Mark may have been the young man who fled naked when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul refers to “Mark the cousin of Barnabas,” who was with him in his imprisonment. Mark set out with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but he turned back for reasons which failed to satisfy Paul (Acts 15:36–40). When another journey was planned, Paul refused to have Mark with him. Instead, Mark went with Barnabas to Cyprus. The breach between Paul and Mark was later healed, and Mark became one of Paul’s companions in Rome, as well as a close friend of Peter’s.

An early tradition recorded by Papias, Bishop of Hieropolis in Asia Minor at the beginning of the second century, names Mark as the author of the Gospel bearing his name. This tradition, which holds that Mark drew his information from the teaching of Peter, is generally accepted. In his First Letter, Peter refers to “my son Mark,” which shows a close relationship between the two men (1Peter 5:13).

The Church of Alexandria in Egypt claimed Mark as its first bishop and most illustrious martyr, and the great Church of St. Mark in Venice commemorates the disciple who progressed from turning back while on a missionary journey with Paul and Barnabas to proclaiming in his Gospel Jesus of Nazareth as Son of God, and bearing witness to that faith in his later life as friend and companion to the apostles Peter and Paul.

St. Catherine of Siena *April 29*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (1:5-2:2)

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 119:73-80

Let your loving-kindness be my comfort, O Lord.

73 Your hands have made me and fashioned me; *
give me understanding, that I may learn your
commandments.

74 Those who fear you will be glad when they see me, *
because I trust in your word.

Let your loving-kindness be my comfort, O Lord.

75 I know, O LORD, that your judgments are right *
and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

76 Let your loving-kindness be my comfort, *
as you have promised to your servant.

Let your loving-kindness be my comfort, O Lord.

- 77 Let your compassion come to me, that I may live, *
for your law is my delight.
- 78 Let the arrogant be put to shame, for they wrong me
with lies; *
but I will meditate on your commandments.

Let your loving-kindness be my comfort, O Lord.

- 79 Let those who fear you turn to me, *
and also those who know your decrees.
- 80 Let my heart be sound in your statutes, *
that I may not be put to shame.

Let your loving-kindness be my comfort, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (12:22-24,29-31)*

Jesus said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Catherine Benincasa was the youngest of twenty-five children of a wealthy dyer of Siena. At six years of age, she had a remarkable vision that probably decided her life's vocation. Walking home from a visit, she stopped on the road and gazed upward, oblivious to everything around her. "I beheld our Lord seated in glory with St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John." She went on to say, later, that the Savior smiled on her and blessed her.

From then on, Catherine spent most of her time in prayer and meditation, despite her mother's attempts to force her to be like other girls. To settle matters, Catherine cut off her hair, her chief beauty. The family harassed her continually; but in the end, convinced that she was deaf to all opposition, her father let her do as she would: close herself away in a darkened room, fast, and sleep on boards. Eventually, she was accepted as a Dominican postulant.

Catherine had numerous visions, and was also tried most severely by loathsome temptations and degrading images. Frequently, she felt totally abandoned by the Lord. At last, in 1366, the Savior appeared with Mary and the Heavenly Host, and espoused her to himself, so ending her years of lonely prayer and struggle. She became a nurse, as Dominicans regularly did, caring for patients with leprosy and cancer whom other nurses disliked to treat.

Opinion in Siena was sharply divided about whether she was a saint or a fanatic, but when the Bishop of Capua was appointed her confessor, he helped her to win full support from the Dominican Mother House. Catherine was a courageous worker in time of severe plague; she visited prisoners condemned to death; she constantly was called upon to arbitrate feuds and to prepare troubled sinners for confession.

During the great schism of the papacy, with rival popes in Rome and Avignon, Catherine wrote tirelessly to princes, kings, and popes, urging them to restore the unity of the Church. She even went to Rome to press further for the cause. Besides her many letters to all manner of people, Catherine wrote a Dialogue, a mystical work dictated in ecstasy. Exhausted and paralyzed, she died at the age of thirty-three.

SAINT PHILIP AND SAINT JAMES, APOSTLES *May 1*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (4:1-6)

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 119:33-40

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, *
and I shall keep it to the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law; *
I shall keep it with all my heart.

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

35 Make me go in the path of your commandments, *
for that is my desire.

36 Incline my heart to your decrees *
and not to unjust gain.

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

37 Turn my eyes from watching what is worthless; *
give me life in your ways.

38 Fulfill your promise to your servant, *
which you make to those who fear you.

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

39 Turn away the reproach which I dread, *
because your judgments are good.

40 Behold, I long for your commandments; *
in your righteousness preserve my life.

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (14:6-14)*

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

The Gospel of the Lord

The two apostles commemorated on this day are among those about whom little is known, except for their mention in the Gospels. James the Less is so called to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee and from James “the brother of the Lord,” or perhaps to indicate youth or lack of stature. He is known to us from the list of the Twelve, where he is called James the son of Alphaeus. He may also be the person referred to in Mark’s Gospel as James the younger, who, with his mother Mary and the other women, watched the crucifixion from a distance.

Philip figures in several important incidents in Jesus’ ministry as reported in John’s Gospel. There we read that Jesus called Philip soon after calling Andrew and Peter. Philip, in turn, found his friend Nathanael, and convinced him to come and see Jesus, the Messiah. Later, when Jesus saw the hungry crowd, he asked Philip, “How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” (John 6:5). Philip’s practical response, “Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little” (John 6:7), was the prelude to the feeding of the multitude with the loaves and fishes. In a later incident in John’s Gospel, some Greeks came to Philip asking to see Jesus. At the Last Supper, Philip’s request, “Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied,” evokes the response, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:8, 9).

St. Athanasius of Alexandria *May 2*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (5:1-5)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 71:1-8

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 1 In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; *
let me never be ashamed.
- 2 In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free; *
incline your ear to me and save me.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; *
you are my crag and my stronghold.
- 4 Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, *
from the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 5 For you are my hope, O LORD God, *
my confidence since I was young.
- 6 I have been sustained by you ever since I was born;
from my mother's womb you have been my strength; *
my praise shall be always of you.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 7 I have become a portent to many; *
but you are my refuge and my strength.
- 8 Let my mouth be full of your praise *
and your glory all the day long.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (10:22-32)*

Jesus said, "And you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord

Rarely in the history of the Church has the course of its development been more significantly determined by one person than it was by Athanasius in the fourth century. Gregory of Nazianzus called him “the pillar of the Church,” and Basil the Great said he was “the God-given physician of her wounds.”

Athanasius was born about 295 in Alexandria, and was ordained deacon in 319. He quickly attracted attention by his opposition to the presbyter Arius, whose denial of the full divinity of the Second Person of the Trinity was gaining widespread acceptance. Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria, took Athanasius as his secretary and adviser to the first Ecumenical Council, at Nicaea in 325, which dealt with the Arian conflict. Athanasius was successful in winning approval for the phrase in the Nicene Creed which has ever since been recognized as expressing unequivocally the full godhead of the Son: “of one Being with the Father” (*homoousios*).

When Alexander died in 328, Athanasius became bishop. He fearlessly defended the Nicene Christology against emperors, magistrates, bishops, and theologians. Five times he was sent into exile. He often seemed to stand alone for the orthodox faith. “Athanasius contra mundum (against the world)” became a by-word. Yet, by the time of his last exile, his popularity among the citizens of Alexandria was so great that the Emperor had to recall him to avoid insurrection in the city.

Athanasius wrote voluminously: biblical interpretation, theological exposition, sermons, and letters. His treatise, *On the Incarnation of the Word of God*, is a still widely read classic.

In it, he writes, “The Savior of us all, the Word of God, in his great love took to himself a body and moved as Man among men, meeting their senses, so to speak, half way. He became himself an object for the senses, so that those who were seeking God in sensible things might apprehend the Father through the works which he, the Word of God, did in the body. Human and human-minded as men were, therefore, to whichever side they looked in the sensible world, they found themselves taught the truth.”

St. Monnica *May 4*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians (4:1-12a)

My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. 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. Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods. Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again? You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted. Friends, I beg you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 115:12-18

We will bless the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

- 12 The LORD has been mindful of us, and he will bless us; *
 he will bless the house of Israel;
 he will bless the house of Aaron;
- 13 He will bless those who fear the LORD, *
 both small and great together.

We will bless the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

- 14 May the LORD increase you more and more, *
you and your children after you.
- 15 May you be blessed by the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

We will bless the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

- 16 The heaven of heavens is the LORD'S, *
but he entrusted the earth to its peoples.
- 17 The dead do not praise the LORD, *
nor all those who go down into silence;
- 18 But we will bless the LORD, *
from this time forth for evermore.
Hallelujah!

We will bless the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (7:11-17)*

Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favorably on his people!" This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

The Gospel of the Lord

Monnica's life story is enshrined in the spiritual autobiography of her eldest son, in *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Born in North Africa about 331, of Berber parents, Monnica was married to a Latinized provincial of Tagaste named Patricius, whom she won to the Christian faith before his death. In her earlier years she was not without worldly ambitions and tastes. She grew in Christian maturity and spiritual insight through an ever-deepening life of prayer.

Her ambition for her gifted son was transformed into a passionate desire for his conversion to Christ. After his baptism in Milan in 387, by Bishop Ambrose, Augustine and his mother, together with a younger brother, planned to return home to Africa. While awaiting ship at Ostia, the port of Rome, Monnica fell ill.

Augustine writes, "One day during her illness she had a fainting spell and lost consciousness for a short time. We hurried to her bedside, but she soon regained consciousness and looked up at my brother and me as we stood beside her. With a puzzled look, she asked, 'Where was I?' Then, watching us closely as we stood there speechless with grief, she said, 'You will bury your mother here.' "

Augustine's brother expressed sorrow, for her sake, that she would die so far from her own country. She said to the two brothers, "It does not matter where you bury my body. Do not let that worry you. All I ask of you is that, wherever you may be, you should remember me at the altar of the Lord." To the question, whether she was not afraid at the thought of leaving her body in an alien land, she replied, "Nothing is far from God, and I need have no fear that he will not know where to find me, when he comes to raise me to life at the end of the world."

Recent excavations at Ostia have uncovered her original tomb. Her mortal remains, however, were transferred in 1430 to the Church of St. Augustine in Rome.

St. Julian of Norwich *May 8*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (10:19-24)

Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 27:5-11

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

- 5 One thing have I asked of the LORD;
one thing I seek; *
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days
of my life;
- 6 To behold the fair beauty of the LORD *
and to seek him in his temple.

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

- 7 For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe
in his shelter; *
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling
and set me high upon a rock.
- 8 Even now he lifts up my head *
above my enemies round about me.

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

- 9 Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation
with sounds of great gladness; *
I will sing and make music to the LORD.
- 10 Hearken to my voice, O LORD, when I call; *
have mercy on me and answer me.
- 11 You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." *
Your face, LORD, will I seek.

Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (4:23-26)*

Jesus said, "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

The Gospel of the Lord

Of Dame Julian's early life we know little, only the probable date of her birth (1342). Her own writings in the Revelations of Divine Love are concerned only with her visions, or "showings," that she experienced when she was thirty years old.

She had been gravely ill and was given the last rites; suddenly, on the seventh day, all pain left her, and she had fifteen visions of the Passion. These brought her great peace and joy. "From that time I desired oftentimes to learn what was our Lord's meaning," she wrote, "and fifteen years after I was answered in ghostly understanding: 'Wouldst thou learn the Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well. Love was his meaning. Who showed it thee? Love. What showed he thee? Love. Wherefore showed it he? For Love. Hold thee therein and thou shalt learn and know more in the same.' Thus it was I learned that Love was our Lord's meaning."

Julian had long desired three gifts from God: "the mind of his passion, bodily sickness in youth, and three wounds—of contrition, of compassion, of will-full longing toward God." Her illness brought her the first two wounds, which then passed from her mind. The third, "will-full longing" (divinely inspired longing), never left her.

She became a recluse, an anchoress, at Norwich soon after her recovery from illness, living in a small dwelling attached to the Church of St. Julian. Even in her lifetime, she was famed as a mystic and spiritual counselor and was frequently visited by clergymen and lay persons, including the famous mystic Margery Kempe. Kempe says of Julian: "This anchoress was expert in knowledge of our Lord and could give good counsel. I spent much time with her talking of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Lady Julian's book is a tender and beautiful exposition of God's eternal and all-embracing love, showing how his charity toward the human race is exhibited in the Passion. Again and again she referred to Christ as "our courteous Lord." Many have found strength in the words the Lord had given her: "I can make all things well; I will make all things well; I shall make all things well; and thou canst see for thyself that all manner of things shall be well."

St. Gregory of Nazianzus *May 9*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (3:14-21)

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 37:3-6,32-33

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

- 3 Put your trust in the LORD and do good; *
 dwell in the land and feed on its riches.
- 4 Take delight in the LORD, *
 and he shall give you your heart's desire.

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

- 5 Commit your way to the LORD and put your trust in him, *
 and he will bring it to pass.
- 6 He will make your righteousness as clear as the light *
 and your just dealing as the noonday.

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

32 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, *
and their tongue speaks what is right.

33 The law of their God is in their heart, *
and their footsteps shall not falter.

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (8:25-32)*

They said to Jesus, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Why do I speak to you at all? I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.” As he was saying these things, many believed in him. Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Gregory of Nazianzus, one of the Cappadocian Fathers, loved God, the art of letters, and the human race—in that order. He was born about 330 in Nazianzus in Cappadocia (now Turkey), the son of a local bishop. He studied rhetoric in Athens with his friend Basil of Caesarea, and Julian, later to be the apostate emperor.

Gregory, together with Basil, compiled an anthology of Origen's works, *The Philokalia*. Two years later, he returned to his home, a town then rent by heresies and schism. His defense of his father's orthodoxy in the face of a violent mob brought peace to the town and prominence to Gregory.

In 361, against his will, Gregory was ordained presbyter, and settled down to live an austere, priestly life. He was not to have peace for long. Basil, in his fight against the Arian Emperor Valens, compelled Gregory to become Bishop of Sasima. According to Gregory, it was "a detestable little place without water or grass or any mark of civilization." He felt, he said, like "a bone flung to the dogs." His friendship with Basil suffered a severe break.

Deaths in his family, and that of his estranged friend Basil, brought Gregory himself to the point of death. He withdrew for healing.

In 379, Gregory moved to Constantinople, a new man and no longer in despair. He appeared as one afire with the love of God. His fame as a theologian rests on five sermons he delivered during this period on the doctrine of the Trinity. They are marked by clarity, strength, and a charming gaiety.

The next year, the new Emperor Theodosius entered Constantinople, and expelled its Arian bishop and clergy. Then, on a rainy day, the crowds in the Great Church of Hagia Sophia acclaimed Gregory bishop, after a ray of sunlight suddenly shone on him.

Power and position meant nothing to Gregory. After the Ecumenical Council of 381, he retired to Nazianzus where he died in 389. Among the Fathers of the Church, he alone is known as "The Divine," "The Theologian."

St. Dunstan *May 19*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (5:15-20)

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 57:6-11

I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord.

- 6 Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, *
and your glory over all the earth.
- 7 My heart is firmly fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; *
I will sing and make melody.

I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord.

- 8 Wake up, my spirit;
awake, lute and harp; *
I myself will waken the dawn.
- 9 I will confess you among the peoples, O LORD; *
I will sing praise to you among the nations.

I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord.

- 10 For your loving-kindness is greater than the heavens, *
and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.
- 11 Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God, *
and your glory over all the earth.

I will confess you among the peoples, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (24:42-47)*

Jesus said, “Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions.”

The Gospel of the Lord

In the ninth century, under King Alfred the Great, England had achieved considerable military, political, cultural, and even some ecclesiastical recovery from the Viking invasions. It was not until the following century that there was a revival of monasticism. In that, the leading figure was Dunstan.

Dunstan was born about 909 into a family with royal connections. He became a monk and in 943 was made Abbot of Glastonbury. During a year-long political exile in Flanders, he encountered the vigorous currents of the Benedictine monastic revival. King Edgar recalled Dunstan to England in 957, appointed him Bishop of Worcester, then of London; and, in 960, named him Archbishop of Canterbury.

Together with his former pupils, Bishops Aethelwold of Winchester and Oswald of Worcester (later of York), Dunstan was a leader of the English Church. All three have been described as “contemplatives in action”—bringing the fruits of their monastic prayer-life to the immediate concerns of Church and State. They sought better education and discipline among the clergy, the end of landed family interest in the Church, the restoration of former monasteries and the establishment of new ones, a revival of monastic life for women, and a more elaborate and carefully ordered liturgical worship.

This reform movement was set forth in the “Monastic Agreement,” a common code for English monasteries drawn up by Aethelwold about 970, primarily under the inspiration of Dunstan. It called for continual intercession for the royal house, and emphasized the close tie between the monasteries and the crown. This close alliance of Church and State, sacramentalized in the anointing of the King, was expressed liturgically in the earliest English coronation ceremony of which a full text survives, compiled for King Edgar by Dunstan and his associates. The long-term effects of this tenth-century reform resulted in the development of two peculiarly English institutions: the “monastic cathedral,” and “monk-bishops.”

Dunstan is reputed to have been an expert craftsman. His name is especially associated with the working of metals and the casting of bells, and he was regarded as the patron saint of those crafts.

St. Alcuin *May 20*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to Titus (2:1-3)

But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. Tell the older men to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good,

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 37:3-6,32-33

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

- 3 Put your trust in the LORD and do good; *
 dwell in the land and feed on its riches.
- 4 Take delight in the LORD, *
 and he shall give you your heart's desire.

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

- 5 Commit your way to the LORD and put your trust in him, *
 and he will bring it to pass.
- 6 He will make your righteousness as clear as the light *
 and your just dealing as the noonday.

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

- 32 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, *
 and their tongue speaks what is right.
- 33 The law of their God is in their heart, *
 and their footsteps shall not falter.

Put your trust in the Lord and do good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (13:10-16)*

Then the disciples came and asked Jesus, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from

those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. The reason I speak to them in parables is that ‘seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.’ With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: ‘You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn— and I would heal them.’ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Alcuin was born about 730 near York into a noble family related to Willibrord, the first missionary to the Netherlands. He was educated at the cathedral school in York under Archbishop Egbert, a pupil of Bede. He thus inherited the best traditions of learning and zeal of the early English Church. After ordination as a deacon in 770, he became head of the York school. Following a meeting in 781 with the Emperor Charlemagne in Pavia (Italy), he was persuaded to become the Emperor's "prime minister," with special responsibility for the revival of education and learning in the Frankish dominions.

Alcuin was named Abbot of Tours in 796, where he died on May 19, 804, and was buried in the church of St. Martin.

Alcuin was a man of vast learning, personal charm, and integrity of character. In his direction of Charlemagne's Palace School at Aachen, he was chiefly responsible for the preservation of the classical heritage of western civilization. Schools were revived in cathedrals and monasteries, and manuscripts of both pagan and Christian writings of antiquity were collated and copied.

Under the authority of Charlemagne, the liturgy was reformed, and service books gathered from Rome were edited and adapted. To this work we owe the preservation of many of the Collects that have come down to us, including the Collect for Purity at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist.

St. Bede *May 25*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (15:1-8)

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 78:1-4

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

- 1 Hear my teaching, O my people; *
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable; *
I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

- 3 That which we have heard and known,
and what our forefathers have told us, *
we will not hide from their children.
- 4 We will recount to generations to come
the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the LORD, *
and the wonderful works he has done.

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (13:47-52)*

Jesus said, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

The Gospel of the Lord

At the age of seven, Bede's parents brought him to the nearby monastery at Jarrow (near Durham in northeast England) for his education. There, as he later wrote, "spending all the remaining time of my life ... I wholly applied myself to the study of Scripture, and amidst the observance of regular discipline, and the daily care of singing in the church, I always took delight in learning, teaching, and writing."

Bede was ordained deacon at nineteen, and presbyter at thirty. He died on the eve of the Ascension while dictating a vernacular translation of the Gospel according to John. About 1020 his body was removed to Durham, and placed in the Galilee, the Lady Chapel at the west end of the Cathedral nave.

Bede was the greatest scholar of his time in the Western Church. He wrote commentaries on the Scriptures based on patristic interpretations. His treatise on chronology was standard for a long time. He also wrote on orthography, poetic meter, and especially on history. His most famous work, *The Ecclesiastical History of England*, written in Latin, remains the primary source for the period 597 to 731, when Anglo-Saxon culture developed and Christianity triumphed. In this work, Bede was clearly ahead of his time. He consulted many documents, carefully evaluated their reliability, and cited his sources. His interpretations were balanced and judicious. He also wrote the *History of the Abbots* (of Wearmouth and Jarrow), and a notable biography of Cuthbert, both in prose and verse.

His character shines through his work—an exemplary monk, an ardent Christian, devoted scholar, and a man of pure and winsome manners. He received the unusual title of Venerable more than a century after his death. According to one legend, the monk writing the inscription for his tomb was at a loss for a word to fill out the couplet:

Hac sunt in fossa

Bedae—blank—ossa

(This grave contains

the— blank—Bede's remains)

That night an angel filled in the blank: Venerabilis.

St. Augustine of Canterbury *May 26*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (5:17-20a)

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 66:1-8

Come now and see the works of God.

- 1 Be joyful in God, all you lands; *
sing the glory of his Name;
sing the glory of his praise.
- 2 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! *
because of your great strength your enemies
cringe before you.

Come now and see the works of God.

- 3 All the earth bows down before you, *
sings to you, sings out your Name."
- 4 Come now and see the works of God, *
how wonderful he is in his doing toward all people.

Come now and see the works of God.

- 5 He turned the sea into dry land,
so that they went through the water on foot, *
and there we rejoiced in him.
- 6 In his might he rules for ever;
his eyes keep watch over the nations; *
let no rebel rise up against him.

Come now and see the works of God.

- 7 Bless our God, you peoples; *
make the voice of his praise to be heard;
- 8 Who holds our souls in life, *
and will not allow our feet to slip.

Come now and see the works of God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (5:1-11)*

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Although Christianity had existed in Britain before the invasions of Angles and Saxons in the fifth century, Pope Gregory the Great decided in 596 to send a mission to the pagan Anglo-Saxons. He selected, from his own monastery on the Coelian hill in Rome, a group of monks, led by their prior, Augustine. They arrived in Kent in 597, carrying a silver cross and an image of Jesus Christ painted on a board, which thus became, so far as we know, “Canterbury’s first icon.” King Ethelbert tolerated their presence and allowed them the use of an old church built on the east side of Canterbury, dating from the Roman occupation of Britain. Here, says the Venerable Bede, they assembled “to sing the psalms, to pray, to say Mass, to preach, and to baptize.” This church of St. Martin is the earliest place of Christian worship in England still in use.

Probably in 601, Ethelbert was converted, thus becoming the first Christian king in England. About the same time, Augustine was ordained bishop somewhere in France and named “Archbishop of the English Nation.” Thus, the see of Canterbury and its Cathedral Church of Christ owe their establishment to Augustine’s mission, as does the nearby Abbey of SS. Peter and Paul, later re-named for Augustine. The “chair of St. Augustine” in Canterbury Cathedral, however, dates from the thirteenth century.

Some correspondence between Augustine and Gregory survives. One of the Pope’s most famous counsels to the first Archbishop of Canterbury has to do with diversity in the young English Church. Gregory writes, “If you have found customs, whether in the Roman, Gallican, or any other Churches that may be more acceptable to God, I wish you to make a careful selection of them, and teach the Church of the English, which is still young in the faith, whatever you can profitably learn from the various Churches. For things should not be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things.”

This counsel bears on the search for Christian “unity in diversity” of the ecumenical movement of today.

Augustine died on May 26, probably in 605.

St. Bertha and St. Ethelbert *May 27*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to Timothy (4:6-10)

If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales. Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 144:9-15

O God, I will sing to you a new song.

- 9 O God, I will sing to you a new song; *
 I will play to you on a ten-stringed lyre.
- 10 You give victory to kings *
 and have rescued David your servant.

O God, I will sing to you a new song.

- 11 Rescue me from the hurtful sword *
 and deliver me from the hand of foreign peoples,
- 12 Whose mouths speak deceitfully *
 and whose right hand is raised in falsehood.

O God, I will sing to you a new song.

- 14 May our barns be filled to overflowing with all manner
of crops; *
may the flocks in our pastures increase by thousands
and tens of thousands;
may our cattle be fat and sleek.
- 15 May there be no breaching of the walls, no going into exile, *
no wailing in the public squares.

O God, I will sing to you a new song.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (10:21-24)*

At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” Then turning to the disciples, Jesus said to them privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Christianity had been known in Britain among the Celts since the third century, but in the fifth century the southeast was invaded by pagan Anglo-Saxons who drove the Celts north and west into Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Ethelbert succeeded his father as Saxon king of Kent in 560. He was, according to the Venerable Bede, a fair ruler and the first English King to promulgate a code of law. Brisk cross-channel trade with France exposed Ethelbert to Roman customs and luxuries.

His admiration for the Frankish ways led him to marry a French Christian princess, Bertha. Although not a Christian himself, Ethelbert promised Bertha's father that she could practice her faith. Good to his word, he welcomed her chaplain and granted him an old Christian mausoleum to convert into the Church of St. Martin, which still stands today.

In 597, the Roman mission to England under Augustine arrived. When he first heard the Gospel, Ethelbert was cautious and unconvinced. However, his fair-mindedness and hospitality were evident in his welcome to Augustine: "The words and promises you bring are fair enough, but because they are new to us and doubtful, I cannot accept them and forsake those beliefs which I and the whole English race have held so long. But as you have come on a long pilgrimage and are anxious, I perceive, to share with us things which you believe are true and good, we do not wish to do you harm; on the contrary, we receive you hospitably and provide what is necessary for your support; nor do we forbid you to win all you can to your faith and religion by your preaching."

The following Pentecost, Ethelbert was baptized, becoming the first Christian King in England. Though he helped the missionaries and founded cathedrals and churches throughout southeastern England, including Canterbury Cathedral, he never coerced his people, or even his children, into conversion. Bertha's kind and charitable nature and Ethelbert's respect for law and the dignity of individual conscience represent, to this day, some of the best of the English Christian spirit.

St. Joan of Arc *May 30*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (3:1-6)

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 144:1-12

Blessed be the Lord my rock!

- 1 Blessed be the LORD my rock! *
 who trains my hands to fight and my fingers to battle;
- 2 My help and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, *
 my shield in whom I trust,
 who subdues the peoples under me.

Blessed be the Lord my rock!

- 3 O LORD, what are we that you should care for us? *
 mere mortals that you should think of us?
- 4 We are like a puff of wind; *
 our days are like a passing shadow.

Blessed be the Lord my rock!

- 5 Bow your heavens, O LORD, and come down; *
 touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
- 6 Hurl the lightning and scatter them; *
 shoot out your arrows and rout them.

Blessed be the Lord my rock!

- 7 Stretch out your hand from on high; *
rescue me and deliver me from the great waters,
from the hand of foreign peoples,
8 Whose mouths speak deceitfully *
and whose right hand is raised in falsehood.

Blessed be the Lord my rock!

- 9 O God, I will sing to you a new song; *
I will play to you on a ten-stringed lyre.
10 You give victory to kings *
and have rescued David your servant.

Blessed be the Lord my rock!

- 11 Rescue me from the hurtful sword *
and deliver me from the hand of foreign peoples,
12 Whose mouths speak deceitfully *
and whose right hand is raised in falsehood.

Blessed be the Lord my rock!

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (12:25-30)*

Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Jeanne d'Arc, or Joan of Arc, was born the daughter of peasant stock in France in 1412. Called the "Maid of Orleans," she was a religious child, and at a young age she began to experience spiritual visions, which she described as voices emerging from a powerful flash of light. She believed that Saint Michael and Saint Catherine, among other saints, called her to save France from the civil war between the Houses of Orleans and Burgundy. At first, her visions were looked upon skeptically, but she eventually convinced King Charles VII, the not yet consecrated King of France, of the genuineness of her visions.

In consultation with several of his theologians, Charles decided to allow Joan to lead an expedition to Orleans. According to legend, she wore a suit of white armor and carried a banner bearing the symbol of the Trinity and the words "Jesus, Maria." Charles' troops were inspired and won the battle for their city. She convinced Charles to proceed to Reims for his coronation and she stood at his side throughout the ceremony.

Joan was eventually taken prisoner by Burgundian troops and sold to the English. In 1431, she returned to France, appeared before the Bishop of Beauvais, and was tried at Rouen on charges of witchcraft and heresy. Her visions were declared "false and diabolical" and she was forced to recant. Later that year, however, she was tried and condemned as a relapsed heretic and burnt to death at Rouen. In 1456, following an appeal of her trial, Pope Callistus III declared her to have been falsely accused. She was Canonized by Pope Benedict XV in 1920.

Although her efforts were unsuccessful in ending civil war in France, she inspired later generations with her faith, her heroism, and her commitment to God and to her King. She is today one of the patron saints of France.

VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY *May 31*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Colossians (3:12-17)

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 113

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

- 1 Hallelujah!
Give praise, you servants of the LORD; *
praise the Name of the LORD.
- 2 Let the Name of the LORD be blessed, *
from this time forth for evermore.

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

- 3 From the rising of the sun to its going down *
let the Name of the LORD be praised.
- 4 The LORD is high above all nations, *
and his glory above the heavens.

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

- 5 Who is like the LORD our God, who sits enthroned on high, *
but stoops to behold the heavens and the earth?
6 He takes up the weak out of the dust *
and lifts up the poor from the ashes.

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

- 7 He sets them with the princes, *
with the princes of his people.
8 He makes the woman of a childless house *
to be a joyful mother of children.

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (1:39-49)*

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

The Gospel of the Lord

This Feast commemorates the visit of the Blessed Virgin to her cousin Elizabeth, recorded in the Gospel according to Luke (1:39–56). Elizabeth, who was then carrying John the Baptist, greeted Mary with the words, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” Mary broke into the song of praise and thanksgiving which we call the Magnificat, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.”

In this scene, the unborn John the Baptist, the prophet who was to prepare the way of the Lord, rejoices in the presence of him whose coming he is later to herald publicly to all Israel, for the Gospel records that when Mary’s greeting came to her kinswoman’s ears, the babe in Elizabeth’s womb leaped for joy.

First Book of Common Prayer *weekday following Pentecost*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (2:38-42)

Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 33:1-5, 20-21

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous.

- 1 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous; *
it is good for the just to sing praises.
- 2 Praise the LORD with the harp; *
play to him upon the psaltery and lyre.
- 3 Sing for him a new song; *
sound a fanfare with all your skill upon the trumpet.

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous.

- 4 For the word of the LORD is right, *
and all his works are sure.
- 5 He loves righteousness and justice; *
the loving-kindness of the LORD fills the whole earth.

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous.

- 20 Our soul waits for the LORD; *
he is our help and our shield.
- 21 Indeed, our heart rejoices in him, *
for in his holy Name we put our trust.

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (4:21-24)*

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

The Gospel of the Lord

The first Book of Common Prayer came into use on the Day of Pentecost, June 9, 1549, in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI. From it have descended all subsequent editions and revisions of the Book in the Churches of the Anglican Communion.

Though prepared by a commission of learned bishops and priests, the format, substance, and style of the Prayer Book were primarily the work of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1533–1556. The principal sources employed in its compilation were the medieval Latin service books of the Use of Sarum (Salisbury), with enrichments from the Greek liturgies, certain ancient Gallican rites, the vernacular German forms prepared by Luther, and a revised Latin liturgy of the reforming Archbishop Hermann of Cologne. The Psalter and other biblical passages were drawn from the English “Great Bible” authorized by King Henry VIII in 1539, and the Litany was taken from the English form issued as early as 1544.

The originality of the Prayer Book, apart from the felicitous translations and paraphrases of the old Latin forms, lay in its simplification of the complicated liturgical usages of the medieval Church, so that it was suitable for use by the laity as well as by the clergy. The Book thus became both a manual of common worship for Anglicans and a primary resource for their personal spirituality.

St. Justin Martyr *June 1*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (1:18-25)

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 16:5-11

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 5 O LORD, you are my portion and my cup; *
it is you who uphold my lot.
- 6 My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; *
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 7 I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel; *
my heart teaches me, night after night.
- 8 I have set the LORD always before me; *
because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 9 My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; *
my body also shall rest in hope.
- 10 For you will not abandon me to the grave, *
nor let your holy one see the Pit.
- 11 You will show me the path of life; *
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (12:44-50)*

Then Jesus cried aloud: “Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Toward the middle of the second century, there came into the young Christian community a seeker for the truth, whose wide interests, noble spirit, and able mind, greatly enriched it.

Justin was born into a Greek-speaking pagan family about the year 110 in Samaria, near Shechem. He was educated in Greek philosophy. Like Augustine after him, he was left restless by all this knowledge. During a walk along the beach at Ephesus, he fell in with a stranger, who told him about Christ. “Straightway a flame was kindled in my soul,” he writes, “and a love of the prophets and those who are friends of Christ possessed me.” He became a Christian as a result of this encounter, and thereafter regarded Christianity as the only “safe and profitable philosophy.”

About 150, Justin moved to Rome. As philosophers did in those days, he started a school—in this case, a school of Christian philosophy—and accepted students. He also wrote. Three of his works are known to us: a dialogue in Platonic style with a Jew named Trypho, and two “apologies.” (An apology in this sense, of course, is not an excuse, but a spirited defense.) Justin’s First and Second Apologies defend Christianity against the Greek charge of irrationality and the Roman charge of disloyalty to the empire. These two works provide us with important insights into developing theological ideas and liturgical practices of early Christianity. In the Dialogue with Trypho, Justin defends the Church against the Jewish charge of distorting the Old Testament. He interprets the Old Testament as the foreshadowing of the New.

While teaching in Rome, he engaged in a public debate with a philosopher of the Cynic school named Crescens, accusing him of ignorance and immorality. Angered, Crescens preferred legal charges against him. Justin and six of his students were arrested and brought before the prefect Rusticus. As the custom was, Rusticus gave them an opportunity to renounce their faith. All steadfastly refused to do so. Justin and his companions were put to death about the year 167.

St. Blandina and Companions *June 2*

A Reading from the first Letter of Peter (1:3-9)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 34:1-8

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 1 I will bless the LORD at all times; *
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
- 2 I will glory in the LORD; *
let the humble hear and rejoice.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 3 Proclaim with me the greatness of the LORD; *
let us exalt his Name together.
- 4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me *
and delivered me out of all my terror.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 5 Look upon him and be radiant, *
and let not your faces be ashamed.
- 6 I called in my affliction and the LORD heard me *
and saved me from all my troubles.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 7 The angel of the LORD encompasses those who fear him, *
and he will deliver them.
- 8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; *
happy are they who trust in him!

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (8:34-38)*

Jesus 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord

In the second century, after a brief respite, Christians in many parts of the Roman empire were once again subjected to persecution. At Lyons and Vienne, in Gaul, there were missionary centers which had drawn many Christians from Asia and Greece. They were living a devout life under the guidance of Pothinus, elderly Bishop of Lyons, when persecution began in 177.

At first, the Christians were socially excluded from Roman homes, the public baths, and the market place; insults, stones, and blows were rained on them by pagan mobs, and Christian homes were vandalized. Soon after, the imperial officials forced Christians to come to the market place for harsh questioning, followed by imprisonment.

Some slaves from Christian households were tortured to extract public accusations that Christians practiced cannibalism, incest, and other perversions. These false accusations roused the mob to such a pitch of wrath that any leniency toward the imprisoned Christians was impossible. Even friendly pagans now turned against them.

The fury of the mob fell most heavily on Sanctus, a deacon; Attalus; Maturus, a recent convert; and Blandina, a slave. According to Eusebius, Blandina was so filled with power to withstand torments that her torturers gave up. "I am a Christian," she said, "and nothing vile is done among us." Sanctus was tormented with red-hot irons. The aged Pothinus, badly beaten, died soon after. Finally, the governor decided to set aside several days for a public spectacle in the amphitheater.

On the final day of the spectacle, writes Eusebius, "Blandina, last of all, like a noble mother who had encouraged her children and sent them ahead victorious to the King, hastened to join them." Beaten, torn, burned with irons, she was wrapped in a net and tossed about by a wild bull. The spectators were amazed at her endurance.

Eusebius concludes: "They offered up to the Father a single wreath, but it was woven of diverse colors and flowers of all kinds. It was fitting that the noble athletes should endure a varied conflict, and win a great victory, that they might be entitled in the end to receive the crown supreme of life everlasting."

Martyrs of Uganda *June 3*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (10:32-39)

But recall those earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and persecution, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion for those who were in prison, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting. Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet “in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back.” But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 138

The love of the Lord endures forever.

- 1 I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart; *
before the gods I will sing your praise.
- 2 I will bow down toward your holy temple
and praise your Name, *
because of your love and faithfulness;

The love of the Lord endures forever.

- 3 For you have glorified your Name *
and your word above all things.
- 4 When I called, you answered me; *
you increased my strength within me.

The love of the Lord endures forever.

5 All the kings of the earth will praise you, O LORD, *
when they have heard the words of your mouth.

6 They will sing of the ways of the LORD, *
that great is the glory of the LORD.

The love of the Lord endures forever.

7 Though the LORD be high, he cares for the lowly; *
he perceives the haughty from afar.

8 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; *
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;
your right hand shall save me.

The love of the Lord endures forever.

9 The LORD will make good his purpose for me; *
O LORD, your love endures for ever;
do not abandon the works of your hands.

The love of the Lord endures forever.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (24:9-14)*

Jesus said, "Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come."

The Gospel of the Lord

On June 3, 1886, thirty-two young men, pages of the court of King Mwanga of Buganda, were burned to death at Namugongo for their refusal to renounce Christianity. In the following months many other Christians throughout the country died by fire or spear for their faith.

These martyrdoms totally changed the dynamic of Christian growth in Uganda. Introduced by a handful of Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries after 1877, the Christian faith had been preached only to the immediate members of the court, by order of King Mutesa. His successor, Mwanga, became increasingly angry as he realized that the first converts put loyalty to Christ above the traditional loyalty to the king. Martyrdoms began in 1885 (including Bishop Hannington and his Companions: see October 29th). Mwanga first forbade anyone to go near a Christian mission on pain of death, but finding himself unable to cool the ardor of the converts, resolved to wipe out Christianity.

The Namugongo martyrdoms produced a result entirely opposite to Mwanga's intentions. The example of these martyrs, who walked to their death singing hymns and praying for their enemies, so inspired many of the bystanders that they began to seek instruction from the remaining Christians. Within a few years the original handful of converts had multiplied many times and spread far beyond the court. The martyrs had left the indelible impression that Christianity was truly African, not simply a white man's religion. Most of the missionary work was carried out by Africans rather than by white missionaries, and Christianity spread steadily. Uganda is now the most Christian nation in Africa.

Renewed persecution of Christians by a Muslim military dictatorship in the 1970's proved the vitality of the example of the Namugongo martyrs. Among the thousands of new martyrs, both Anglican and Roman Catholic, was Janani Luwum, Archbishop of the (Anglican) Church of Uganda, whose courageous ministry and death inspired not only his countrymen but also Christians throughout the world.

St. Boniface *June 5*

A Reading from the Book of the prophet Micah (4:1-2)

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 115:1-8

To your name, O Lord, we give glory.

- 1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us,
but to your Name give glory; *
because of your love and because of your faithfulness.
- 2 Why should the heathen say, *
"Where then is their God?"

To your name, O Lord, we give glory.

- 3 Our God is in heaven; *
whatever he wills to do he does.
- 4 Their idols are silver and gold, *
the work of human hands.

To your name, O Lord, we give glory.

- 5 They have mouths, but they cannot speak; *
eyes have they, but they cannot see;
- 6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; *
noses, but they cannot smell;

To your name, O Lord, we give glory.

- 7 They have hands, but they cannot feel;
feet, but they cannot walk; *
they make no sound with their throat.
- 8 Those who make them are like them, *
and so are all who put their trust in them.

To your name, O Lord, we give glory.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (24:44-53)*

Then Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

The Gospel of the Lord

Boniface is justly called one of the “Makers of Europe.” He was born at Crediton in Devonshire, England, about 675, and received the English name of Winfred. He was educated at Exeter, and later at Nursling, near Winchester, where he was professed a monk and ordained to the presbyterate.

Inspired by the examples of Willibrord and others, Winfred decided to become a missionary, and made his first Journey to Frisia (Netherlands) in 716—a venture with little success. In 719 he started out again; but this time he first went to Rome to seek papal approval. Pope Gregory the Second commissioned him to work in Germany, and gave him the name of Boniface.

For the rest of his days, Boniface devoted himself to reforming, planting, and organizing churches, monasteries, and dioceses in Hesse, Thuringia, and Bavaria. Many helpers and supplies came to him from friends in England. In 722 the Pope ordained him a bishop, ten years later made him an archbishop, and in 743 gave him a fixed see at Mainz.

The Frankish rulers also supported his work. At their invitation, he presided over reforming councils of the Frankish Church; and in 752, with the consent of Pope Zacharias, he anointed Pepin (Pippin) as King of the Franks. Thus, the way was prepared for Charlemagne, son of Pepin, and the revival of a unified Christian dominion in western Europe.

In 753 Boniface resigned his see, to spend his last years again as a missionary in Frisia. On June 5, 754, while awaiting a group of converts for confirmation, he and his companions were murdered by a band of pagans, near Dokkum. His body was buried at Fulda, a monastery he had founded in 744, near Mainz.

St. Columba *June 9*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (3:11-23)

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple. Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.” So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 97:1-2,7-12

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 1 The LORD is King;
let the earth rejoice; *
let the multitude of the isles be glad.
- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him, *
righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 7 Confounded be all who worship carved images
and delight in false gods! *
Bow down before him, all you gods.
- 8 Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, *
because of your judgments, O LORD.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 9 For you are the LORD,
most high over all the earth; *
you are exalted far above all gods.
- 10 The LORD loves those who hate evil; *
he preserves the lives of his saints
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 11 Light has sprung up for the righteous, *
and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.
- 12 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, *
and give thanks to his holy Name.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (10:17-20)*

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" Jesus said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord

Many legends have gathered about Columba, but there are also some historical data concerning his many works in the writings of Bede and Adamnan. According to one story, Patrick of Ireland foretold Columba's birth in a prophecy:

He will be a saint and will be devout,
He will be an abbot, the king of royal graces,
He will be lasting and for ever good;
The eternal kingdom be mine by his protection.

Columba was born in Ireland in 521, and early in life showed scholarly and clerical ability. He entered the monastic life, and almost immediately set forth on missionary travels. Even before ordination to the presbyterate in 551, he had founded monasteries at Derry and Durrow.

Twelve years after his ordination, Columba and a dozen companions set out for northern Britain, where the Picts were still generally ignorant of Christianity. Columba was kindly received, allowed to preach, convert, and baptize. He was also given possession of the island of Iona, where, according to legend, his tiny boat had washed ashore. Here he founded the celebrated monastery which became the center for the conversion of the Picts. From Iona, also, his disciples went out to found other monasteries, which, in turn, became centers of missionary activity.

Columba made long journeys through the Highlands, as far as Aberdeen. He often returned to Ireland to attend synods, and thus established Iona as a link between Irish and Pictish Christians. For thirty years, he evangelized, studied, wrote, and governed his monastery at Iona. He supervised his monks in their work in the fields and workrooms, in their daily worship and Sunday Eucharist, and in their study and teaching. He died peacefully while working on a copy of the Psalter. He had put down his pen, rested a few hours, and at Matins was found dead before the Altar, a smile on his face. He is quoted by his biographer Adamnan as having said, "This day is called in the sacred Scriptures a day of rest, and truly to me it will be such, for it is the last of my life and I shall enter into rest after the fatigues of my labors."

St. Ephrem the Syrian *June 10*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (3:8-12)

Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 98:5-10

Shout with joy to the Lord.

- 5 Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands; *
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.
6 Sing to the LORD with the harp, *
with the harp and the voice of song.

Shout with joy to the Lord.

- 7 With trumpets and the sound of the horn *
shout with joy before the King, the LORD.
8 Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it, *
the lands and those who dwell therein.

Shout with joy to the Lord.

- 9 Let the rivers clap their hands, *
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD,
when he comes to judge the earth.
10 In righteousness shall he judge the world *
and the peoples with equity.

Shout with joy to the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (16:12-15)*

Jesus said, “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.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Ephrem of Edessa was a teacher, poet, orator, and defender of the faith—a voice of Aramaic Christianity, speaking the language Jesus spoke, using the imagery Jesus used. Edessa, a Syrian city, was a center for the spread of Christianity in the East long before the conversion of the western Roman empire.

The Syrians called Ephrem “The Harp of the Holy Spirit,” and his hymns still enrich the liturgies of the Syrian Church. Ephrem was one whose writings were influential in the development of Church doctrine. Jerome writes: “I have read in Greek a volume of his on the Holy Spirit; though it was only a translation, I recognized therein the sublime genius of the man.” Ephrem was born at Nisibis in Mesopotamia. At eighteen, he was baptized by James, Bishop of Nisibis. It is believed that Ephrem accompanied James to the famous Council of Nicaea in 325. He lived at Nisibis until 363, when the Persians captured the city and drove out the Christians.

Ephrem retired to a cave in the hills above the city of Edessa. There he wrote most of his spiritual works. He lived on barley bread and dried herbs, sometimes varied by greens. He drank only water. His clothing was a mass of patches. But he was not a recluse, and frequently went to Edessa to preach. Discovering that hymns could be of great value in support of the true faith, he opposed Gnostic hymns with his own, sung by a choir of women.

During a famine in 372–373, he distributed food and money to the poor and organized a sort of ambulance service for the sick. He died of exhaustion, brought on by his long hours of relief work.

Of his writings, there remain 72 hymns, commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, and numerous homilies. In his commentary on the Passion, he wrote: “No one has seen or shall see the things which you have seen. The Lord himself has become the altar, priest, and bread, and the chalice of salvation. He alone suffices for all, yet none suffices for him. He is Altar and Lamb, victim and sacrifice, priest as well as food.”

SAINT BARNABAS THE APOSTLE *June 11*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (11:19-30;13:1-3)

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians.” At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 112:4-9

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 4 Light shines in the darkness for the upright; *
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.

- 5 It is good for them to be generous in lending *
and to manage their affairs with justice.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 6 For they will never be shaken; *
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.
7 They will not be afraid of any evil rumors; *
their heart is right;
they put their trust in the Lord.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 8 Their heart is established and will not shrink, *
until they see their desire upon their enemies.
9 They have given freely to the poor, *
and their righteousness stands fast for ever;
they will hold up their head with honor.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (10:7-16)*

Jesus said, "As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

The Gospel of the Lord

“Joseph, a Levite born in Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), sold a field he owned, brought the money, and turned it over to the apostles” (Acts 4:36–37). This first reference in the New Testament to Barnabas introduces one whose missionary efforts would cause him to be called, like the Twelve, an apostle. As a Jew of the Dispersion, he had much in common with Paul. When Paul came to Jerusalem after his conversion, the disciples were afraid to receive him. It was Barnabas who brought Paul to the apostles, and declared to them how, on the road to Damascus, Paul had seen the Lord, and had preached boldly in the name of Jesus (Acts 9:27). Later, Barnabas, having settled in Antioch, sent for Paul to join him in leading the Christian Church in that city.

Barnabas and Paul were sent by the disciples in Antioch to carry famine relief to the Church in Jerusalem. Upon their return, the Church in Antioch sent them on their first missionary journey beginning at Cyprus. At Lystra in Asia Minor, the superstitious people took them to be gods, supposing the eloquent Paul to be Mercury, the messenger of the gods, and Barnabas to be Jupiter, the chief of the gods, a testimony to the commanding presence of Barnabas. The association of Barnabas and Paul was broken, after their journey, by a disagreement about Mark, who had left the mission to return to Jerusalem. After attending the Council of Jerusalem with Barnabas, Paul made a return visit to the Churches he and Barnabas had founded in Asia Minor. Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus, where Barnabas is traditionally honored as the founder of the Church.

It seems that Barnabas continued his journeys for the Gospel, because Paul mentions him several times in his letters to the Galatians, the Corinthians, and the Colossians. Tradition has it that he was martyred at Salamis in Cyprus.

St. Basil the Great *June 14*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (2:6-13)

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 139:1-9

Lord, you have searched me out and known me.

- 1 LORD, you have searched me out and known me; *
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
- 2 You trace my journeys and my resting-places *
and are acquainted with all my ways.

Lord, you have searched me out and known me.

- 3 Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, *
but you, O LORD, know it altogether.
- 4 You press upon me behind and before *
and lay your hand upon me.

Lord, you have searched me out and known me.

5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; *
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.

6 Where can I go then from your Spirit? *
where can I flee from your presence?

Lord, you have searched me out and known me.

7 If I climb up to heaven, you are there; *
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.

8 If I take the wings of the morning *
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

9 Even there your hand will lead me *
and your right hand hold me fast.

Lord, you have searched me out and known me.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (10:21-24)*

At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." Then turning to the disciples, Jesus said to them privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it."

The Gospel of the Lord

Basil was born about 329, in Caesarea of Cappadocia, into a Christian family of wealth and distinction. Educated in classical Hellenism, Basil might have continued in academic life, had it not been for the death of a beloved younger brother and the faith of his sister, Macrina. He was baptized at the age of twenty-eight, and ordained a deacon soon after.

Macrina had founded the first monastic order for women at Annesi. Fired by her example, Basil made a journey to study the life of anchorites in Egypt and elsewhere. In 358 he returned to Cappadocia and founded the first monastery for men at Iborra. Assisted by Gregory Nazianzus, he compiled *The Longer and Shorter Rules*, which transformed the solitary anchorites into a disciplined community of prayer and work. The Rules became the foundation for all Eastern monastic discipline. The monasteries also provided schools to train leaders for Church and State.

Basil was ordained presbyter in 364. In the conflict between the Arians (supported by an Arian Emperor) and orthodox Christians, Basil became convinced that he should be made Bishop of Caesarea. By a narrow margin, he was elected Bishop of Caesarea, Metropolitan of Cappadocia, and Exarch of Pontus. He was relentless in his efforts to restore the faith and discipline of the clergy, and in defense of the Nicene faith. When the Emperor Valens sought to undercut Basil's power by dividing the See of Cappadocia, Basil forced his brother Gregory to become Bishop of Nyssa.

In his treatise, *On the Holy Spirit*, Basil maintained that both the language of Scripture and the faith of the Church require that the same honor, glory, and worship is to be paid to the Spirit as to the Father and the Son. It was entirely proper, he asserted, to adore God in liturgical prayer, not only with the traditional words, "Glory to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit;" but also with the formula, "Glory to the Father with the Son together with the Holy Spirit."

Basil was also concerned about the poor, and when he died, he willed to Caesarea a complete new town, built on his estate, with housing, a hospital and staff, a church for the poor, and a hospice for travelers. He died at the age of fifty, in 379, just two years before the Second Ecumenical Council, which affirmed the Nicene faith.

St. Alban *June 22*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (3:13-16)

Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 31:1-5

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 1 In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame; *
deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.
- 4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *
for you are my tower of strength.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me,
O LORD, O God of truth.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (10:34-42)*

Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Alban is the earliest Christian in Britain who is known by name and, according to tradition, the first British martyr. He was a soldier in the Roman army stationed at Verulamium, a city about twenty miles northeast of London, now called St. Alban's. He gave shelter to a Christian priest who was fleeing from persecution, and was converted by him. When officers came to Alban's house, he dressed himself in the garments of the priest and gave himself up. Alban was tortured and martyred in place of the priest, on the hilltop where the Cathedral of St. Alban's now stands. The traditional date of his martyrdom is 303 or 304, but recent studies suggest that the year was actually 209, during the persecution under the Emperor Septimius Severus.

The site of Alban's martyrdom soon became a shrine. King Offa of Mercia established a monastery there about the year 793, and in the high Middle Ages St. Alban's ranked as the premier Abbey in England. The great Norman abbey church, begun in 1077, now serves as the cathedral of the diocese of St. Alban's, established in 1877. It is the second longest church in England (Winchester Cathedral is the longest, by six feet), and it is built on higher ground than any other English cathedral. In a chapel east of the choir and high Altar, there are remains of the fourteenth century marble shrine of St. Alban.

The Venerable Bede gives this account of Alban's trial: "When Alban was brought in, the judge happened to be standing before an altar, offering sacrifice to devils ... 'What is your family and race?' demanded the judge. 'How does my family concern you?' replied Alban; 'If you wish to know the truth about my religion, know that I am a Christian and am ready to do a Christian's duty.' 'I demand to know your name,' insisted the judge. 'Tell me at once.' 'My parents named me Alban,' he answered, 'and I worship and adore the living and true God, who created all things.' "

NATIVITY OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST *June 24*

A Reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah (40:1-11)

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 85:8-11

Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

- 8 I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.
- 9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.

Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

- 10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
 righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
 and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

- 12 The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, *
 and our land will yield its increase.
13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
 and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (1:57-80)*

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness

before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

The Gospel of the Lord

John the Baptist, the prophet, and forerunner of Jesus, was the son of elderly parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, and was related to Jesus on his mother's side. His birth is celebrated six months before Christmas Day, since, according to Luke, Elizabeth became pregnant six months before the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary.

John figures prominently in all four Gospels, but the account of his birth is given only in the Gospel according to Luke. His father, Zechariah, a priest of the Temple at Jerusalem, was struck speechless because he doubted a vision foretelling John's birth. When his speech was restored, Zechariah uttered a canticle of praise, the Benedictus, which is one of the canticles in the Daily Office.

John lived ascetically in the desert. He was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt, and ate locusts and wild honey. He preached repentance, and called upon people to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom and of the Messiah, baptizing his followers to signify their repentance and new life. Jesus himself was baptized by John in the Jordan.

John had many followers, some of whom became Jesus' disciples. Because of his denunciation of the sins of Herod, especially Herod's incestuous marriage, John incurred the enmity of Herodias, Herod's wife, and was put in prison. Through Herodias' plotting with Salome, her daughter, Herod was led to promise a gift to Salome, who demanded John's head. John was thereupon executed.

John is remembered during Advent as a prophet, and at Epiphany as the baptizer of Jesus. The Gospel according to John quotes the Baptist as saying to his followers that Jesus is the Lamb of God, and prophesying, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

St. Irenaeus of Lyons June 28

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (2:22b-26)

Shun youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and that they may escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 145:8-13

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

- 8 The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.
9 The LORD is loving to everyone *
and his compassion is over all his works.

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

- 10 All your works praise you, O LORD, *
and your faithful servants bless you.
11 They make known the glory of your kingdom *
and speak of your power;

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

- 12 That the peoples may know of your power *
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; *
your dominion endures throughout all ages.

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (11:33-36)*

Jesus said, “No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar, but on the lampstand so that those who enter may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light; but if it is not healthy, your body is full of darkness. Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be as full of light as when a lamp gives you light with its rays.”

The Gospel of the Lord

If theology is “thinking about faith” and arranging those thoughts in some systematic order, then Irenaeus has been rightly recognized by Catholics and Protestants alike as the first great systematic theologian.

There is considerable doubt about the year of Irenaeus’ birth; estimates vary from 97 to 160. It is certain that he learned the Christian faith in Ephesus at the feet of the venerable Polycarp, who in turn had known John the Evangelist. Some years before 177, probably while Irenaeus was still in his teens, he carried the tradition of Christianity to Lyons in southern France.

His name means “the peaceable one”—and suitably so. The year 177 brought hardship to the mission in Gaul. Persecution broke out, and a mounting tide of heresy threatened to engulf the Church. Irenaeus, by now a presbyter, was sent to Rome to mediate the dispute regarding Montanism, which the Bishop of Rome, Eleutherus, seemed to embrace. While Irenaeus was on this mission, the aged Bishop of Lyons, Pothinus, died in prison during a local persecution. When Irenaeus returned to Lyons, he was elected bishop to succeed Pothinus.

Irenaeus’ enduring fame rests mainly on a large treatise, entitled *The Refutation and Overthrow of Gnosis, Falsely So-Called*, usually shortened to *Against Heresies*. In it, Irenaeus describes the major Gnostic systems, thoroughly, clearly, and often with biting humor. It is one of our chief sources of knowledge about Gnosticism. He also makes a case for Christianity which has become a classic, resting heavily on Scripture, and on the continuity between the teaching of the Apostles and the teaching of bishops, generation after generation, especially in the great see cities. Against the Gnostics, who despised the flesh and exalted the spirit, he stressed two doctrines: that of the creation as good, and that of the resurrection of the body.

A late and uncertain tradition claims that he suffered martyrdom, about 202.

SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL, APOSTLES *June 29*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (4:1-8)

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 87

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

- 1 On the holy mountain stands the city he has founded; *
the LORD loves the gates of Zion
more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
- 2 Glorious things are spoken of you, *
O city of our God.

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

- 3 I count Egypt and Babylon among those who know me; *
behold Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia:
in Zion were they born.
- 4 Of Zion it shall be said, "Everyone was born in her, *
and the Most High himself shall sustain her."

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

- 5 The LORD will record as he enrolls the peoples, *
“These also were born there.”
- 6 The singers and the dancers will say, *
“All my fresh springs are in you.”

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (21:15-19)*

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Peter and Paul, the two greatest leaders of the early Church, are commemorated separately, Peter on January 18, for his confession of Jesus as the Messiah, and Paul on January 25, for his conversion, but they are commemorated together on June 29 in observance of the tradition of the Church that they both died as martyrs in Rome during the persecution under Nero, in 64.

Paul, the well-educated and cosmopolitan Jew of the Dispersion, and Peter, the uneducated fisherman from Galilee, had differences of opinion in the early years of the Church concerning the mission to the Gentiles. More than once, Paul speaks of rebuking Peter for his continued insistence on Jewish exclusiveness; yet their common commitment to Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel proved stronger than their differences; and both eventually carried that mission to Rome, where they were martyred. According to tradition, Paul was granted the right of a Roman citizen to be beheaded by a sword, but Peter suffered the fate of his Lord, crucifixion, though with head downward.

A generation after their martyrdom, Clement of Rome, writing to the Church in Corinth, probably in 96 A.D., says: "Let us come to those who have most recently proved champions; let us take up the noble examples of our own generation. Because of jealousy and envy the greatest and most upright pillars of the Church were persecuted and competed unto death. Let us bring before our eyes the good apostles—Peter, who because of unrighteous jealousy endured not one or two, but numerous trials, and so bore a martyr's witness and went to the glorious place that he deserved. Because of jealousy and strife Paul pointed the way to the reward of endurance; seven times he was imprisoned, he was exiled, he was stoned, he was a preacher in both east and west, and won renown for his faith, teaching uprightness to the whole world, and reaching the farthest limit of the west, and bearing a martyr's witness before the rulers, he passed out of the world and was taken up into the holy place, having proved a very great example of endurance."

Independence Day July 4

A Reading from the Book of Deuteronomy (10:17-21)

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the Lord your God; him alone you shall worship; to him you shall hold fast, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things that your own eyes have seen.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 145:1-9

Every day will I bless you, O Lord.

- 1 I will exalt you, O God my King, *
and bless your Name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I bless you *
and praise your Name for ever and ever.
- 3 Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; *
there is no end to his greatness.

Every day will I bless you, O Lord.

- 4 One generation shall praise your works to another *
and shall declare your power.
- 5 I will ponder the glorious splendor of your majesty *
and all your marvelous works.
- 6 They shall speak of the might of your wondrous acts, *
and I will tell of your greatness.

Every day will I bless you, O Lord.

- 7 They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness; *
they shall sing of your righteous deeds.
- 8 The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.
- 9 The LORD is loving to everyone *
and his compassion is over all his works.

Every day will I bless you, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (5:43-48)*

Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Proper Psalms, Lessons, and Prayers were first appointed for this national observance in the Proposed Prayer Book of 1786. They were deleted, however, by the General Convention of 1789, primarily as a result of the intervention of Bishop William White. Though himself a supporter of the American Revolution, he felt that the required observance was inappropriate, since the majority of the Church's clergy had, in fact, been loyal to the British crown.

Writing about the Convention which had called for the observance of the day throughout "this Church, on the fourth of July, for ever," White said, "The members of the convention seem to have thought themselves so established in their station of ecclesiastical legislators, that they might expect of the many clergy who had been averse to the American revolution the adoption of this service; although, by the use of it, they must make an implied acknowledgment of their error, in an address to Almighty God ... The greater stress is laid on this matter because of the notorious fact, that the majority of the clergy could not have used the service, without subjecting themselves to ridicule and censure. For the author's part, having no hindrance of this sort, he contented himself with having opposed the measure, and kept the day from respect to the requisition of the convention; but could never hear of its being kept, in above two or three places beside Philadelphia."

It was not until the revision of 1928 that provision was again made for the liturgical observance of the day.

St. Benedict of Nursia July 11

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (2:12-16)

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 119:129-136

When your word goes forth, O Lord, it gives light.

- 129 Your decrees are wonderful; *
therefore I obey them with all my heart.
130 When your word goes forth it gives light; *
it gives understanding to the simple.

When your word goes forth, O Lord, it gives light.

- 131 I open my mouth and pant; *
I long for your commandments.
132 Turn to me in mercy, *
as you always do to those who love your Name.

When your word goes forth, O Lord, it gives light.

- 133 Steady my footsteps in your word; *
let no iniquity have dominion over me.
134 Rescue me from those who oppress me, *
and I will keep your commandments.

When your word goes forth, O Lord, it gives light.

135 Let your countenance shine upon your servant *
and teach me your statutes.

136 My eyes shed streams of tears, *
because people do not keep your law.

When your word goes forth, O Lord, it gives light.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (14:27-33)*

Jesus said, "Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."

The Gospel of the Lord

Benedict is generally accounted the father of western monasticism. He was born about 480, at Nursia in central Italy, and was educated at Rome. The style of life he found there disgusted him. Rome at this time was overrun by various barbarian tribes; the period was one of considerable political instability, a breakdown of western society, and the beginnings of barbarian kingdoms. Benedict's disapproval of the manners and morals of Rome led him to a vocation of monastic seclusion. He withdrew to a hillside cave above Lake Subiaco, about forty miles west of Rome, where there was already at least one other monk. Gradually, a community grew up around Benedict. Sometime between 525 and 530, he moved south with some of his disciples to Monte Cassino, midway between Rome and Naples, where he established another community, and, about 540, composed his monastic Rule. He does not appear to have been ordained or to have contemplated the founding of an "order." He died sometime between 540 and 550 and was buried in the same grave as his sister, Scholastica.

No personality or text in the history of monasticism, it has been said, has occasioned more studies than Benedict and his rule. The major problem for historians is the question of how much of the rule is original. This is closely related to the question of the date of another, very similar but anonymous, rule for monks, known as the "Rule of the Master," which may antedate Benedict's Rule by ten years. This does not detract from the fact that Benedict's firm but reasonable rule has been the basic source document from which most later monastic rules were derived. Its average day provides for a little over four hours to be spent in liturgical prayer, a little over five hours in spiritual reading, about six hours of work, one hour for eating, and about eight hours of sleep. The entire Psalter is to be recited in the Divine Office once every week.

At profession, the new monk takes vows of "stability, amendment of life, and obedience." Pope Gregory the Great wrote Benedict's "Life" in the second book of his Dialogues. He adopted Benedict's monasticism as an instrument of evangelization when in 596 he sent Augustine and his companions to convert the Anglo-Saxon people. In the Anglican Communion today, the rules of many religious orders are influenced by Benedict's rule.

William White July 17

A Reading from the first Letter Paul to Timothy (3:1-10)

The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way— for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil. Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 92:1-4,11-14

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

- 1 It is a good thing to give thanks to the LORD, *
and to sing praises to your Name, O Most High;
- 2 To tell of your loving-kindness early in the morning *
and of your faithfulness in the night season;

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

- 3 On the psaltery, and on the lyre, *
and to the melody of the harp.
- 4 For you have made me glad by your acts, O LORD; *
and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

- 11 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, *
and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.
12 Those who are planted in the house of the LORD *
shall flourish in the courts of our God;

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

- 13 They shall still bear fruit in old age; *
they shall be green and succulent;
14 That they may show how upright the LORD is, *
my Rock, in whom there is no fault.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (21:15-17)*

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

The Gospel of the Lord

William White was born in Philadelphia, March 24, 1747, and was educated at the college of that city, graduating in 1765. In 1770 he went to England, was ordained deacon on December 23, and priest on April 25, 1772. On his return home, he became assistant minister of Christ and St. Peter's, 1772–1779, and rector from that year until his death, July 17, 1836. He also served as chaplain of the Continental Congress from 1777 to 1789, and then of the United States Senate until 1800. Chosen unanimously as first Bishop of Pennsylvania, September 14, 1786, he went to England again, with Samuel Provoost, Bishop-elect of New York; and the two men were consecrated in Lambeth Chapel on Septuagesima Sunday, February 4, 1787, by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishops of Bath and Wells and of Peterborough.

Bishop White was the chief architect of the Constitution of the American Episcopal Church and the wise overseer of its life during the first generation of its history. He was the Presiding Bishop at its organizing General Convention in 1789 and again from 1795 until his death. He was a theologian of no mean ability, and among his proteges, in whose formation he had a large hand, were such leaders of a new generation as John Henry Hobart, Jackson Kemper, and William Augustus Muhlenberg. White's gifts of statesmanship and reconciling moderation steered the American Church through the first decades of its independent life. His influence in his native city made him its "first citizen." To few men has the epithet "venerable" been more aptly applied.

St. Macrina July 19

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians (3:7-11)

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 119:97-104

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

97 Oh, how I love your law! *

all the day long it is in my mind.

98 Your commandment has made me wiser than my enemies, *

and it is always with me.

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, *

for your decrees are my study.

100 I am wiser than the elders, *

because I observe your commandments.

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

101 I restrain my feet from every evil way, *

that I may keep your word.

102 I do not shrink from your judgments, *

because you yourself have taught me.

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

103 How sweet are your words to my taste! *
they are sweeter than honey to my mouth.

104 Through your commandments I gain understanding; *
therefore I hate every lying way.

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (11:27-30)*

Jesus said, "All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The Gospel of the Lord

Macrina (340–379) was a monastic, theologian and teacher. She founded one of the earliest Christian communities in the Cappadocian city of Pontus. Macrina left no writings; we know of her through the works of her brother St. Gregory of Nyssa (page 266). In his *Life of St. Macrina*, Gregory describes her as both beautiful and brilliant, an authoritative spiritual teacher.

Macrina persuaded her mother Emmelia to renounce their wealthy lifestyle and to help her establish a monastery on the family's estate. Macrina's ideal of community emphasized caring for the poor and ministering to the wider community. She literally picked up young women who lay in the road starving. Many joined her order.

Gregory credits Macrina as the spiritual and theological intelligence behind her siblings' notable careers in the Church. Gregory, and their brothers St. Basil (page 426), St. Peter of Sebaste, and Naucratis went to her often for theological counsel. Macrina frequently challenged her celebrated brothers. She told Gregory his fame was not due to his own merit, but to the prayers of his parents. She took Basil in hand when he returned from Athens "monstrously conceited about his skill in rhetoric." Under her influence, Basil and Peter renounced material possessions and turned away from secular academia to become monks and theologians. Basil and Peter wrote a Rule for community life, ensuring that Macrina's ideas for Christian community would have lasting authority. Basil, Gregory and Peter all became bishops, in no small measure because of Macrina's influence, and became leading defenders of the Nicene faith.

Gregory visited Macrina as she lay dying on two planks on the floor. He relates Macrina's last words as a classical Greek farewell oration imbued with Holy Scripture. In both his *Life of St. Macrina* and in his later treatise of *The Soul and Resurrection*, Gregory presents Macrina admiringly as a Christian Socrates, delivering beautiful deathbed prayers and teachings about the resurrection.

SAINT MARY MAGDALENE July 22

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (5:14-18)

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 42:1-7

My soul longs for you, O God.

- 1 As the deer longs for the water-brooks, *
so longs my soul for you, O God.
- 2 My soul is athirst for God, athirst for the living God; *
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?

My soul longs for you, O God.

- 3 My tears have been my food day and night, *
while all day long they say to me,
“Where now is your God?”
- 4 I pour out my soul when I think on these things: *
how I went with the multitude and led them into the
house of God,
- 5 With the voice of praise and thanksgiving, *
among those who keep holy-day.

My soul longs for you, O God.

- 6 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? *
and why are you so disquieted within me?
- 7 Put your trust in God; *
for I will yet give thanks to him,
who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

My soul longs for you, O God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (20:11-18)*

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Gospel of the Lord

Mary of Magdala near Capernaum was one of several women who followed Jesus and ministered to him in Galilee. The Gospel according to Luke records that Jesus “went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out ... ” (Luke 8:1–2). The Gospels tell us that Mary was healed by Jesus, followed him, and was one of those who stood near his cross at Calvary.

It is clear that Mary Magdalene’s life was radically changed by Jesus’ healing. Her ministry of service and steadfast companionship, even as a witness to the crucifixion, has, through the centuries, been an example of the faithful ministry of women to Christ. All four Gospels name Mary as one of the women who went to the tomb to mourn and to care for Jesus’ body. Her weeping for the loss of her Lord strikes a common chord with the grief of all others over the death of loved ones. Jesus’ tender response to her grief—meeting her in the garden, revealing himself to her by calling her name—makes her the first witness to the risen Lord. She is given the command, “Go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (John 20:17). As the first messenger of the resurrection, she tells the disciples, “I have seen the Lord” (John 20:18).

In the tradition of the Eastern Church, Mary is regarded as the equal of an apostle; and she is held in veneration as the patron saint of the great cluster of monasteries on Mount Athos.

SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLE July 25

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (11:27-12:3)

At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (This was during the festival of Unleavened Bread.)

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 7:1-10

O Lord my God, I take refuge in you.

- 1 O LORD my God, I take refuge in you; *
save and deliver me from all who pursue me;
- 2 Lest like a lion they tear me in pieces *
and snatch me away with none to deliver me.

O Lord my God, I take refuge in you.

- 3 O LORD my God, if I have done these things: *
if there is any wickedness in my hands,
- 4 If I have repaid my friend with evil, *
or plundered him who without cause is my enemy;

O Lord my God, I take refuge in you.

- 5 Then let my enemy pursue and overtake me, *
trample my life into the ground,
and lay my honor in the dust.

6 Stand up, O LORD, in your wrath; *
rise up against the fury of my enemies.

O Lord my God, I take refuge in you.

7 Awake, O my God, decree justice; *
let the assembly of the peoples gather round you.

8 Be seated on your lofty throne, O Most High; *
O LORD, judge the nations.

O Lord my God, I take refuge in you.

9 Give judgment for me according to my
righteousness, O LORD, *
and according to my innocence, O Most High.

10 Let the malice of the wicked come to an end,
but establish the righteous; *
for you test the mind and heart, O righteous God.

O Lord my God, I take refuge in you.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (20:20-28)*

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The Gospel of the Lord

James, the brother of John, is often known as James the Greater, to distinguish him from the other Apostle of the same name, commemorated in the calendar with Philip, and also from James “the brother of our Lord.” He was the son of a prosperous Galilean fisherman, Zebedee, and with his brother John left his home and his trade in obedience to the call of Christ. With Peter and John, he seems to have belonged to an especially privileged group, whom Jesus chose to be witnesses of the Transfiguration, the raising of Jairus’ daughter, and the agony in the garden.

Apparently, James shared John’s hot-headed disposition, and Jesus nicknamed the brothers, “Boanerges” (Sons of Thunder). James’ expressed willingness to share the cup of Christ was realized in his being the first of the Apostles to die for him. As the Acts of the Apostles records, “About that time Herod the King laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the Church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword” (Acts 12:1–2).

According to an old tradition, the body of James was taken to Compostela, Spain, which has been a shrine for pilgrims for centuries. Among the Spaniards, James is one of the most popular saints. In the Middle Ages, under the title of Santiago de Compostela, his aid was especially invoked in battle against the Moors.

St. Joachim and St. Anne July 26

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians (1:1-5)

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 132:11-19

The Lord will give to him the throne of his father David.

- 11 The LORD has sworn an oath to David; *
in truth, he will not break it:
12 “A son, the fruit of your body *
will I set upon your throne.

The Lord will give to him the throne of his father David.

- 13 If your children keep my covenant
and my testimonies that I shall teach them, *
their children will sit upon your throne for evermore.”
14 For the LORD has chosen Zion; *
he has desired her for his habitation:

The Lord will give to him the throne of his father David.

- 15 “This shall be my resting-place for ever; *
here will I dwell, for I delight in her.
16 I will surely bless her provisions, *
and satisfy her poor with bread.

The Lord will give to him the throne of his father David.

- 17 I will clothe her priests with salvation, *
and her faithful people will rejoice and sing.
18 There will I make the horn of David flourish; *
I have prepared a lamp for my Anointed.
19 As for his enemies, I will clothe them with shame; *
but as for him, his crown will shine.”

The Lord will give to him the throne of his father David.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (1:26-33)*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

The Gospel of the Lord

The Gospels tell us little about the home of our Lord's mother. She is thought to have been of Davidic descent and to have been brought up in a devout Jewish family that cherished the hope of Israel for the coming kingdom of God, in remembrance of the promise to Abraham and the forefathers.

In the second century, a devout Christian sought to supply a fuller account of Mary's birth and family, to satisfy the interest and curiosity of believers. An apocryphal gospel, known as the Protevangelium of James or The Nativity of Mary, appeared. It included legendary stories of Mary's parents Joachim and Anne. These stories were built out of Old Testament narratives of the births of Isaac and of Samuel (whose mother's name, Hannah, is the original form of Anne), and from traditions of the birth of John the Baptist. In these stories, Joachim and Anne—the childless, elderly couple who grieved that they would have no posterity—were rewarded with the birth of a girl whom they dedicated in infancy to the service of God under the tutelage of the temple priests.

In 550 the Emperor Justinian I erected in Constantinople the first church to Saint Anne. The Eastern Churches observe her festival on July 25. Not until the twelfth century did her feast become known in the West. Pope Urban VI fixed her day, in 1378, to follow the feast of Saint James. Joachim has had several dates assigned to his memory; but the new Roman Calendar of 1969 joins his festival to that of Anne on this day.

Sts. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany July 29

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (12:9-13)

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 36:5-10

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens.

- 5 Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, *
and your faithfulness to the clouds.
- 6 Your righteousness is like the strong mountains,
your justice like the great deep; *
you save both man and beast, O LORD.

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens.

- 7 How priceless is your love, O God! *
your people take refuge under the
shadow of your wings.
- 8 They feast upon the abundance of your house; *
you give them drink from the river of your delights.

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens.

- 9 For with you is the well of life, *
and in your light we see light.
- 10 Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you, *
and your favor to those who are true of heart.

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (11:1-7,17-44)*

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 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 Jews 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 Jews 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 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 upward 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."

The Gospel of the Lord

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany are described in the Gospels according to Luke and John as close and much-loved friends of Jesus. Luke records the well-known story of their hospitality, which made Martha a symbol of the active life and Mary of the contemplative, though some commentators would take the words of Jesus to be a defense of that which Mary does best, and a commendation of Martha for what she does best—neither vocation giving grounds for despising the other.

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead which, in John's Gospel, is a powerful anticipation of resurrection and sign of eternal life for those who claim by faith the resurrection of Jesus. The story of the raising of Lazarus also sheds additional light on Martha. Jesus delays his visit to their home and arrives only after Lazarus is dead. Martha comes out to meet Jesus on the road, and while somewhat terse at first, she is still confident of his power to heal and restore. The exchange between them evokes Martha's deep faith and acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah.

John also records the supper at Bethany at which Mary anointed Jesus' feet with fragrant ointment and wiped them with her hair. This tender gesture of love evoked criticism from the disciples. Jesus interpreted the gift as a preparation for his death and burial.

The devotion and friendship of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus have been an example of fidelity and service to the Lord. Their hospitality and kindness, and Jesus' enjoyment of their company, show us the beauty of human friendship and love at its best. And the raising of Lazarus by Jesus is a sign of hope and promise for all who are in Christ.

St. Joseph of Arimathea July 31

A Reading from the Letter of James (1:17-18)

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 16:5-11

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 5 O LORD, you are my portion and my cup; *
it is you who uphold my lot.
- 6 My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; *
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 7 I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel; *
my heart teaches me, night after night.
- 8 I have set the LORD always before me; *
because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 9 My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; *
my body also shall rest in hope.
- 10 For you will not abandon me to the grave, *
nor let your holy one see the Pit.
- 11 You will show me the path of life; *
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (23:50-56)*

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

The Gospel of the Lord

All that is certainly known of Joseph of Arimathaea comes from the narratives of the burial of Jesus in the Gospels. Though John speaks of Joseph as a secret disciple of our Lord, and associates him with Nicodemus, another member of the Jewish Sanhedrin who was drawn to Jesus, we know nothing of any further activity of these men in the early Christian community. Later, however, legends developed about their leadership in the Church. One of the more attractive is the story of Joseph's coming to the ancient Church of Glastonbury in Britain and bringing with him the Holy Grail (the cup used at the Last Supper). This tradition cannot be dated earlier than the thirteenth century. Although this and other stories obtained wide credence, they are not based on historical facts.

Joseph's claim for remembrance does not depend upon such legends, however beautiful and romantic. When our Lord's intimate disciples were hiding for fear of the authorities, Joseph came forward boldly and courageously to do, not only what was demanded by Jewish piety, but to act generously and humanely by providing his own tomb for the decent and proper burial of our Lord's body, thus saving it from further desecration.

St. Lydia *August 3*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (16:11-15)

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 100

Serve the Lord with gladness.

- 1 Be joyful in the LORD, all you lands; *
serve the LORD with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.
- 2 Know this: The LORD himself is God; *
he himself has made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Serve the Lord with gladness.

- 3 Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise; *
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.
- 4 For the LORD is good;
his mercy is everlasting; *
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

Serve the Lord with gladness.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (8:1-3)*

Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

The Gospel of the Lord

Though the first century was a patriarchal time from which we have very few women's voices, the apostles and indeed the whole early church depended on women for sustenance, protection and support.

Lydia was Paul's first European convert. She was a Gentile woman in Philippi who, like many others, was attracted to Judaism. As what the Jewish community called a "God-fearer" she was undoubtedly accorded respect by the Jewish community, but still would have been marginalized. Paul encountered her on a riverbank where she and a group of women had gathered for Sabbath prayers. Undoubtedly Paul preached his gospel of inclusiveness to them and Lydia "opened her heart" and, together with the whole household of which she was head, was baptized.

Lydia was a prosperous cloth-merchant and a person of means. She was able to lodge Paul, Timothy, and other of his companions in her house, which Paul used as a local base of operations (Acts 16: 11-40).

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST *August 6*

A Reading from the second Letter of Peter (1:13-21)

I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to refresh your memory, since I know that my death will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 99:5-9

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

- 5 Proclaim the greatness of the LORD our God
and fall down before his footstool; *
he is the Holy One.
- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,
and Samuel among those who call upon his Name, *
they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

- 7 He spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; *
they kept his testimonies and the decree that he gave them.
- 8 “O LORD our God, you answered them indeed; *
you were a God who forgave them,
yet punished them for their evil deeds.”

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

- 9 Proclaim the greatness of the LORD our God
and worship him upon his holy hill; *
for the LORD our God is the Holy One.

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (9:28-36)*

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” —not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

The Gospel of the Lord

The Transfiguration is not to be understood only as a spiritual experience of Jesus while at prayer, which three chosen disciples, Peter, James, and John, were permitted to witness. It is one of a series of supernatural manifestations, by which God authenticated Jesus as his Son. It is at one with the appearance of the angels at the birth and at his resurrection, and with the descent of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism.

Matthew records the voice from heaven saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Matthew 17:5). Briefly the veil is drawn aside, and a chosen few are permitted to see Jesus, not only as the earth-born son of Mary, but as the eternal Son of God. Moses and Elijah witness to Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. In Luke's account of the event, they speak of the "exodus" which Jesus is to accomplish at Jerusalem. A cloud, a sign of divine presence, envelops the disciples, and a heavenly voice proclaims Jesus to be the Son of God.

Immediately thereafter Jesus announces to Peter, James, and John the imminence of his death. As Paul was later to say of Jesus, "Though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and was born in human likeness. And, being found in human form, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6–8).

The Feast of the Transfiguration is held in the highest esteem by the Eastern Churches. The figure of the transfigured Christ is regarded as a foreshadowing of the Risen and Ascended Lord. The festival, however, was only accepted into the Roman calendar on the eve of the Reformation, and for that reason was not included in the reformed calendar of the English Church. Since its inclusion in the American revision of 1892, it has been taken into most modern Anglican calendars.

John Mason Neale *August 7*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (1:1-9)

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 106:1-5

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

- 1 Hallelujah!
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, *
for his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Who can declare the mighty acts of the LORD *
or show forth all his praise?
- 3 Happy are those who act with justice *
and always do what is right!

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

- 4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favor you have
for your people, *
and visit me with your saving help;
- 5 That I may see the prosperity of your elect
and be glad with the gladness of your people, *
that I may glory with your inheritance.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (13:44-52)*

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

The Gospel of the Lord

John Mason Neale was a priest of many talents. As a hymnodist, he furnished The Hymnal 1982 with several original hymns and more than thirty translations of Latin and Greek hymns. As a priest, he gave active support to the Oxford Movement in its revival of medieval liturgical forms. As a humanitarian, he founded the Sisterhood of St. Margaret for the relief of suffering women and girls.

Neale was born in London in 1818, studied at Cambridge, where he also served as tutor and chaplain, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1842. He was both a scholar and a creative poet, whose skills in composing original verse and translating Latin and Greek hymns into effective English speech patterns were devoted to the Church. With such familiar words as “Good Christian men, rejoice,” “Come, ye faithful, raise the strain,” and “Creator of the stars of night,” he has greatly enriched our hymnody.

Gentleness combined with firmness, good humor, modesty, patience, and devotion, with “an unbounded charity,” describe Neale’s character. Despite poor health, he was a prolific writer and compiler. Among his works are Medieval Hymns and Sequences, Hymns of the Eastern Church, Liturgiology and Church History, and a four-volume commentary on the Psalms. In a busy life, he also found time to establish the Camden Society, later called the Ecclesiological Society.

Though he never received preferment in England, his great contributions were recognized both in the United States and in Russia, where the Metropolitan presented him with a rare copy of the Old Believers’ Liturgy. He died on the Feast of the Transfiguration at the age of 46, leaving a lasting mark on our worship.

No future hymnal is conceivable without the inclusion of some of Neale’s fine devotional poetry. The Prayer Book, for example, cites two of his translations by name as being especially appropriate for Palm Sunday and Good Friday: “All glory, laud, and honor” for the procession with the palms, and “Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle” at the climactic point of the Good Friday service.

St. Dominic *August 8*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (10:13-17)

For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 112:4-9

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 4 Light shines in the darkness for the upright; *
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.
5 It is good for them to be generous in lending *
and to manage their affairs with justice.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 6 For they will never be shaken; *
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.
7 They will not be afraid of any evil rumors; *
their heart is right;
they put their trust in the Lord.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 8 Their heart is established and will not shrink, *
until they see their desire upon their enemies.
9 They have given freely to the poor, *
and their righteousness stands fast for ever;
they will hold up their head with honor.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (7:16-18)*

Then Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Dominic was the founder of the Order of Preachers, commonly known as Dominicans. In England they were called Blackfriars, because of the black mantle they wore over their white habits. Dominic was born about 1170 or shortly thereafter, in Spain.

Influenced by the contemporary search for a life of apostolic poverty, Dominic is said to have sold all his possessions to help the poor during a famine in 1191. Ordained in 1196, he soon became a canon and then sub-prior of the Cathedral of Osma, where a rule of strict discipline was established among the canons.

In 1203 he began a number of preaching tours in Languedoc, a region in Southern France, against the Albigensian heretics, who held Manichaean, dualistic views. He kept himself aloof, however, from the repressive crusade which was instigated against them. In 1214, his plan to found a special preaching order for the conversion of the Albigensians began to take shape, and in the following year he took his followers to Toulouse.

At the Fourth Lateran Council in October, 1215, Dominic sought confirmation of his order from Pope Innocent III. This was granted by Innocent's successor, Honorius III, in 1216 and 1217.

Over the next few years, Dominic traveled extensively, establishing friaries, organizing the order, and preaching, until his death on August 6, 1221. He is said to have been a man of austere poverty and heroic sanctity, always zealous to win souls by the preaching of pure doctrine.

The Dominican Constitutions, first formulated in 1216, and revised and codified by the Master-General of the Order, Raymond of Peñafort, in 1241, place a strong emphasis on learning, preaching, and teaching, and, partly through the influence of Francis of Assisi, on absolute poverty.

The Dominicans explicitly gave priority to intellectual work. They established major houses in most university centers, to which they contributed such notable teachers as Thomas Aquinas. Their Constitutions express the priority this way: "In the cells, moreover, they can write, read, pray, sleep, and even stay awake at night, if they desire, on account of study."

St. Laurence *August 10*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (9:6-10)

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, “He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 126

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

- 1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, *
 then were we like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
 and our tongue with shouts of joy.
- 3 Then they said among the nations, *
 “The LORD has done great things for them.”

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

- 4 The LORD has done great things for us, *
 and we are glad indeed.
- 5 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, *
 like the watercourses of the Negev.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

- 6 Those who sowed with tears *
will reap with songs of joy.
- 7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (12:24-26)*

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor."

The Gospel of the Lord

Laurence the Deacon, one of the most popular saints of the Roman Church, was martyred during the persecution initiated in 257 by the Emperor Valerian. That persecution was aimed primarily at the clergy and the laity of the upper classes. All properties used by the Church were confiscated, and assemblies for Christian worship were forbidden. On August 4, 258, Pope Sixtus II and his seven deacons were apprehended in the Roman catacombs. They were summarily executed, except for the archdeacon, Laurence, who was martyred on the tenth. Though no authentic “Acts” of Laurence’s ordeal have been preserved, the tradition is that the prefect demanded information from him about the Church’s treasures. Laurence, in reply, assembled the sick and poor to whom, as archdeacon, he had distributed the Church’s relief funds, and presented them to the prefect, saying, “These are the treasures of the Church.” Laurence is believed to have been roasted alive on a gridiron.

The Emperor Constantine erected a shrine and basilica over Laurence’s tomb, which is in a catacomb on the Via Tiburtina. The present Church of St. Laurence Outside the Walls, a beautiful double basilica (damaged in World War II), includes a choir and sanctuary erected by Pope Pelagius II (579–590) and a nave by Pope Honorius III (1216–1227).

Laurence is the subject of a small round glass medallion, probably dating from the fourth century, now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. It bears the simple inscription, “Live with Christ and Laurence.”

The Greek word from which we get our English word “martyr” simply means “witness;” but, in the age of the persecutions, before Constantine recognized the Church early in the fourth century, a “martyr” was generally one who had witnessed even to death. For Laurence, as for all the martyrs, to die for Christ was to live with Christ.

St. Clare *August 11*

A Reading from the first Letter of Peter (4:1-2)

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 63:1-8

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

- 1 O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; *
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.
- 2 Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place, *
that I might behold your power and your glory.

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

- 3 For your loving-kindness is better than life itself; *
my lips shall give you praise.
- 4 So will I bless you as long as I live *
and lift up my hands in your Name.

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

- 5 My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, *
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,
- 6 When I remember you upon my bed, *
and meditate on you in the night watches.

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

- 7 For you have been my helper, *
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.
- 8 My soul clings to you; *
your right hand holds me fast.

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (12:32-37)*

Jesus said, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them."

The Gospel of the Lord

In the latter part of the twelfth century, the Church had fallen on evil days, and was weak and spiritually impoverished. It was then that Francis of Assisi renounced his wealth and established the mendicant order of Franciscans. At the first gathering of the order in 1212, Francis preached a sermon that was to make a radical change in the life of an eighteen-year-old young woman named Clare.

The daughter of a wealthy family, and a noted beauty, Clare was inspired by Francis' words with the desire to serve God and to give her life to the following of Christ's teaching. She sought out Francis, and begged that she might become a member of his order, placing her jewelry and rich outer garments on the altar as an offering. Francis could not refuse her pleas. He placed her temporarily in a nearby Benedictine convent.

When this action became known, friends and relatives tried to take Clare from her retreat. She was adamant. She would be the bride of Christ alone. She prevailed, and soon after was taken by Francis to a poor dwelling beside the Church of St. Damian at Assisi. Several other women joined her. She became Mother Superior of the order, which was called the "Poor Ladies of St. Damian."

The order's practices were austere. They embraced the Franciscan rule of absolute poverty. Their days were given over to begging and to works of mercy for the poor and the neglected. Clare herself was servant, not only to the poor, but to her nuns. Clare governed the convent for forty years, caring for the sisters, ready to do whatever Francis directed. She said to him, "I am yours by having given my will to God." Her biographer says that she "radiated a spirit of fervor so strong that it kindled those who but heard her voice."

In 1253 her last illness began. Daily she weakened, and daily she was visited by devoted people, by priests, and even by the Pope. On her last day, as she saw many weeping by her bedside, she exhorted them to love "holy poverty" and to share their possessions. She was heard to say: "Go forth in peace, for you have followed the good road. Go forth without fear, for he that created you has sanctified you, has always protected you, and loves you as a mother. Blessed be God, for having created me."

Jeremy Taylor *August 13*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (14:7-9,10b-12)

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 16:5-11

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 5 O LORD, you are my portion and my cup; *
it is you who uphold my lot.
- 6 My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; *
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 7 I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel; *
my heart teaches me, night after night.
- 8 I have set the LORD always before me; *
because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

- 9 My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; *
my body also shall rest in hope.
- 10 For you will not abandon me to the grave, *
nor let your holy one see the Pit.
- 11 You will show me the path of life; *
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (3:11-21)*

Jesus said, “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. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Jeremy Taylor, one of the most influential of the “Caroline Divines,” was educated at Cambridge and, through the influence of William Laud, became a Fellow of All Souls at Oxford. He was still quite young when he became chaplain to Charles I and, later, during the Civil War, a chaplain in the Royalist army.

The successes of Cromwell’s forces brought about Taylor’s imprisonment and, after Cromwell’s victory, Taylor spent several years in forced retirement as chaplain to the family of Lord Carberry in Wales. It was during this time that his most influential works were written, especially *Holy Living and Holy Dying* (1651). Among his other works, *Liberty of Prophesying* proved to be a seminal work in encouraging the development of religious toleration in the seventeenth century. The principles set forth in that book rank with those of Milton’s *Areopagitica* in its plea for freedom of thought.

Despite Taylor’s unquestioned literary genius, he was, unfortunately, not asked to have a part in the Prayer Book revision of 1662. The first American Prayer Book, however, incorporated one of his prayers, part of which has been adapted to serve as the Collect of his commemoration; and another has been added in the present Prayer Book.

Taylor’s theology has sometimes been criticized, most bitinglly by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who claims that Taylor seems to “present our own holy life as the grounds of our religious hope, rather than as the fruit of that hope, whose ground is the mercies of Christ.” No such complaint, however, was ever made about his prayers, which exemplify the best of Caroline divinity, blended with great literary genius.

In later life, Taylor and his family moved to the northeastern part of Ireland where, after the restoration of the monarchy, he became Bishop of Down and Connor. To this was later added the small adjacent diocese of Dromore. As Bishop, he labored tirelessly to rebuild churches, restore the use of the Prayer Book, and overcome continuing Puritan opposition. As Vice-chancellor of Trinity College, Dublin, he took a leading part in reviving the intellectual life of the Church of Ireland. He remained to the end a man of prayer and a pastor.

SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN *August 15*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians (4:4-7)

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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 34:1-8

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 1 I will bless the LORD at all times; *
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
- 2 I will glory in the LORD; *
let the humble hear and rejoice.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 3 Proclaim with me the greatness of the LORD; *
let us exalt his Name together.
- 4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me *
and delivered me out of all my terror.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 5 Look upon him and be radiant, *
and let not your faces be ashamed.
- 6 I called in my affliction and the LORD heard me *
and saved me from all my troubles.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

- 7 The angel of the LORD encompasses those who fear him, *
and he will deliver them.
- 8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; *
happy are they who trust in him!

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (1:46-55)*

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

The Gospel of the Lord

The honor paid to Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, goes back to the earliest days of the Church. Two Gospels tell of the manner of Christ's birth, and the familiar Christmas story testifies to the Church's conviction that he was born of a virgin. In Luke's Gospel, we catch a brief glimpse of Jesus' upbringing at Nazareth, when the child was wholly in the care of his mother and his foster-father, Joseph.

During Jesus' ministry in Galilee, we learn that Mary was often with the other women who followed Jesus and ministered to his needs. At Calvary, she was among the little band of disciples who kept watch at the cross. After the resurrection, she was to be found with the Twelve in the upper room, watching and praying until the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Mary was the person closest to Jesus in his most impressionable years, and the words of the Magnificat, as well as her humble acceptance of the divine will, bear more than an accidental resemblance to the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount.

Later devotion has claimed many things for Mary which cannot be proved from Holy Scripture. What we can believe is that one who stood in so intimate a relationship with the incarnate Son of God on earth must, of all the human race, have the place of highest honor in the eternal life of God. A paraphrase of an ancient Greek hymn expresses this belief in very familiar words: "O higher than the cherubim, more glorious than the seraphim, lead their praises, alleluia."

St. Bernard of Clairvaux *August 20*

A Reading from the Letter of Jude (1-3)

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance. Beloved, while eagerly preparing to write to you about the salvation we share, I find it necessary to write and appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 19:7-11

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect
and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the LORD is sure
and gives wisdom to the innocent.
- 8 The statutes of the LORD are just
and rejoice the heart; *
the commandment of the LORD is clear
and gives light to the eyes.

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

- 9 The fear of the LORD is clean
and endures for ever; *
the judgments of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold,
more than much fine gold, *
sweeter far than honey,
than honey in the comb.
- 11 By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (15:7-11)*

Jesus said, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Bernard, fiery defender of the Church in the twelfth century, was famed for the ardor with which he preached love for God “without measure.” He was completely absorbed, even to the neglect of his own health, in support of the purity, doctrine, and prerogatives of the Church. He fulfilled his own definition of a holy man: “seen to be good and charitable, holding back nothing for himself, but using his every gift for the common good.”

Bernard was the son of a knight and landowner who lived near Dijon, France. He was born in 1090 and given a secular education, but in 1113 he entered the Benedictine Abbey of Citeaux. His family was not pleased with his choice of a monastic life, but he nevertheless persuaded four of his brothers and about twenty-six of his friends to join him in establishing a monastery at Clairvaux in 1115.

During the following ten years, Bernard denied himself sleep that he might have time to write letters and sermons. He preached so persuasively that sixty new Cistercian abbeys were founded, all affiliated with Clairvaux. By 1140, his writings had made him one of the most influential figures in Christendom. He participated actively in every controversy that threatened the Church. He was an ardent critic of Peter Abelard’s attempt to reconcile inconsistencies of doctrine by reason, because he felt that such an approach was a downgrading of the mysteries.

When a former monk of Clairvaux was elected Pope, as Eugenius III, Bernard became his troubleshooter. He preached the Crusade against the Albigensians, and the Second Crusade to liberate Jerusalem, winning much support for the latter in France and Germany. When that Crusade ended in disaster, Bernard was roundly attacked for having supported it. He died soon after in 1153. He was canonized in 1174.

Among Bernard’s writings are treatises on papal duty, on love, on the veneration of Mary, and a commentary on the Song of Songs. Among well known hymns, he is credited with having written “O sacred head sore wounded,” “Jesus, the very thought of thee,” and “Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts.”

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE *August 24*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (4:9-15)

For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day. I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 91:1-4

You, O Lord, are my refuge.

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, *
abides under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 He shall say to the LORD,
“You are my refuge and my stronghold, *
my God in whom I put my trust.”

You, O Lord, are my refuge.

- 3 He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter *
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover you with his pinions,
and you shall find refuge under his wings; *
his faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler.

You, O Lord, are my refuge.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (22:24-30)*

A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. “You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Bartholomew is one of the twelve Apostles known to us only by his being listed among them in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. His name means “Son of Tolmai,” and he is sometimes identified with Nathanael, the friend of Philip, the “Israelite without guile” in John’s Gospel, to whom Jesus promised the vision of angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

Nothing more is heard of him in the four Gospels.

Some sources credit Bartholomew with having written a Gospel, whose existence was known to Jerome and Bede, but which is lost today. There is a tradition that Bartholomew traveled to India, and Eusebius reports that when Pantaenus of Alexandria visited India, between 150 and 200, he found there “the Gospel according to Matthew” in Hebrew, which had been left behind by “Bartholomew, one of the Apostles.”

An ancient tradition maintains that Bartholomew was flayed alive at Albanopolis in Armenia.

St. Louis *August 25*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Colossians (2:6-10)

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 21:1-7

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

- 1 The king rejoices in your strength, O LORD; *
how greatly he exults in your victory!
- 2 You have given him his heart's desire; *
you have not denied him the request of his lips.

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

- 3 For you meet him with blessings of prosperity, *
and set a crown of fine gold upon his head.
- 4 He asked you for life, and you gave it to him: *
length of days, for ever and ever.

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

- 5 His honor is great, because of your victory; *
splendor and majesty have you bestowed upon him.
- 6 For you will give him everlasting felicity *
and will make him glad with the joy of your presence.
- 7 For the king puts his trust in the LORD; *
because of the loving-kindness of the Most High, he
will not fall.

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (12:22-31)*

Jesus said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Louis IX of France was canonized by the Church in 1297. A man of unusual purity of life and manners, he was sincerely committed to his faith and to its moral demands. Courageous and fearless in battle, patient and uncomplaining in adversity, he was an impartial, just, and compassionate sovereign. The one word that summarizes his character is integrity.

Louis' crusading adventures in the Middle East and in North Africa were of little historical consequence. Such ventures were part of the piety of his time. Throughout his life he was diligent in attending divine worship, and constant in his charities, both open and secret. Unusually free of the bigotry of his age, Louis had an intelligent interest in the theological issues of his day. But his primary concern was to put Christian ethics into practice in both his personal and his public life.

Louis was born at Poissy, April 25, 1214, and was crowned King at Rheims on November 29, 1226. His early religious exercises of devotion and asceticism were inspired by his mother, Blanche of Castile. He died August 25, 1270, while on crusade at Tunis, and was buried with his royal peers in the basilica of St. Denis near Paris.

After his canonization, his relics were transferred to the Sainte Chapelle, the lovely Gothic chapel in Paris which he built as a shrine for relics of our Lord's passion. The building is itself a fitting monument to his genuine piety and beautiful character.

Because of his determined effort to live a personal life of Franciscan poverty and self-denial in the midst of worldly power and splendor—he wore a hair shirt under his royal dress—Louis is honored as patron saint of the Third Order of St. Francis.

St. Augustine of Hippo *August 28*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (12:22-24,28-29)

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 87

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

- 1 On the holy mountain stands the city he has founded; *
the LORD loves the gates of Zion
more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
- 2 Glorious things are spoken of you, *
O city of our God.

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

- 3 I count Egypt and Babylon among those who know me; *
behold Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia:
in Zion were they born.
- 4 Of Zion it shall be said, “Everyone was born in her, *
and the Most High himself shall sustain her.”

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

- 5 The LORD will record as he enrolls the peoples, *
“These also were born there.”
- 6 The singers and the dancers will say, *
“All my fresh springs are in you.”

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (14:6-15)*

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it. If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

The Gospel of the Lord

Augustine, perhaps the greatest theologian in the history of Western Christianity, was born in 354 at Tagaste in North Africa. In his restless search for truth, he was attracted by Manichaeism and Neoplatonism, and was constantly engaged in an inner struggle with his personal morals. Finally, under the influence of his mother Monnica, Augustine surrendered to the Christian faith in the late summer of 386. He was baptized by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, on Easter Eve in 387. After returning to North Africa in 391, Augustine found himself unexpectedly chosen by the people of Hippo to be a presbyter. Four years later he was chosen bishop of that city. His spiritual autobiography, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, written shortly before 400 in the form of an extended prayer, is a classic of Western spirituality.

Augustine wrote countless treatises, letters, and sermons. They have provided a rich source of new and fresh insights into Christian truth. The Manichaeans had attempted to solve the problem of evil by positing the existence of an independent agency eternally opposed to God. In refutation, Augustine affirmed that all creation is essentially good, having been created by God; and that evil is, properly speaking, the privation of good. A rigorist sect, the Donatists, had split from the Great Church after the persecution of Diocletian in the early fourth century. Against them, Augustine asserted that the Church was “holy,” not because its members could be proved holy, but because holiness was the purpose of the Church, to which all its members are called.

Stirred by Alaric the Visigoth’s sack of Rome in 410, Augustine wrote his greatest work, *The City of God*. In it he writes: “Two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by love of self, even to the contempt of God, the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The earthly city glories in itself, the heavenly city glories in the Lord ... In the one, the princes, and the nations it subdues, are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love.”

Augustine died on August 28, 430, as the Vandals were besieging his own earthly city of Hippo.

St. Aidan *August 31*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (12:6-13)

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 104:32-35

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 32 May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; *
 may the LORD rejoice in all his works.
33 He looks at the earth and it trembles; *
 he touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 34 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; *
 I will praise my God while I have my being.
35 May these words of mine please him; *
 I will rejoice in the LORD.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (10:25b-30)*

Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater

than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.”

The Gospel of the Lord

The Gospel first came to the northern English in 627, when King Edwin of Northumbria was converted by missionaries from Canterbury. Edwin's death in battle in 632 was followed by a severe pagan reaction. A year later, Edwin's exiled nephew Oswald gained the kingdom, and proceeded at once to restore the Christian mission.

During his exile, Oswald had lived at Columba's monastery of Iona, where he had been converted and baptized. Hence he sent to Iona, rather than to Canterbury, for missionaries. The head of the new mission was a gentle monk named Aidan, who centered his work on Lindisfarne, an island off the northeast coast of England. Aidan and his companions restored Christianity in Northumbria and extended the mission through the midlands as far south as London.

Aidan died at Bamborough, on August 31, 651. Bede said of him: "He neither sought nor loved anything of this world, but delighted in distributing immediately to the poor whatever was given him by kings or rich men of the world. He traversed both town and country on foot, never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent necessity. Wherever in his way he saw any, either rich or poor, he invited them, if pagans, to embrace the mystery of the faith; or if they were believers, to strengthen them in the faith and stir them up by words and actions to alms and good works."

NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY *September 8*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (8:28-30)

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 98:1-4

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song, *
for he has done marvelous things.
- 2 With his right hand and his holy arm *
has he won for himself the victory.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 3 The LORD has made known his victory; *
his righteousness has he openly shown in
the sight of the nations.
- 4 He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to
the house of Israel, *
and all the ends of the earth have seen the
victory of our God.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (1:18-23)*

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an

angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

The Gospel of the Lord

The Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary was celebrated at least by the sixth century, when St. Romanos the Melodist, an Eastern Christian who composed many of the hymns used in the Eastern Catholic and Eastern Orthodox liturgies, composed a hymn for the feast. The feast spread to Rome in the seventh century, but it was a couple more centuries before it was celebrated throughout the West.

The source for the story of the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the *Protoevangelium of James*, an apocryphal gospel written about A.D. 150. From it, we learn the names of Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, as well as the tradition that the couple was childless until an angel appeared to Anna and told her that she would conceive. (Many of the same details appear also in the later apocryphal Gospel of the Nativity of Mary.)

The traditional date of the feast, September 8, falls exactly nine months after the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. Perhaps because of its close proximity to the feast of the Assumption of Mary, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is not celebrated today with the same solemnity as the Immaculate Conception. It is, nonetheless, a very important feast, because it prepares the way for the birth of Christ.

Alexander Crummell *September 10*

A Reading from the Letter of James (1:2-5)

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 19:7-11

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect
and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the LORD is sure
and gives wisdom to the innocent.
- 8 The statutes of the LORD are just
and rejoice the heart; *
the commandment of the LORD is clear
and gives light to the eyes.

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

- 9 The fear of the LORD is clean
and endures for ever; *
the judgments of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold,
more than much fine gold, *
sweeter far than honey,
than honey in the comb.
- 11 By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (4:1-10,13-20)*

Again Jesus began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." And he said, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

The Gospel of the Lord

Born March 3, 1819, in New York City, Alexander Crummell struggled against racism all his life. As a young man, he was driven out of an academy in New Hampshire, dismissed as a candidate for Holy Orders in New York, and rejected for admittance to General Seminary. Ordained in 1844 as a priest in the Diocese of Massachusetts, he left for England after being excluded from participating in diocesan convention.

After receiving a degree from Cambridge, he went to Liberia as a missionary. The African race, Crummell believed, possessed a “warm, emotional and impulsive energy,” which in America had been corrupted by oppression. The Episcopal Church, with its emphasis on rational and moral discipline, was especially fitted for the moral and spiritual regeneration of Afro-Americans. A model Christian republic seemed possible in Liberia. European education and technology, combined with traditional African communal culture, and undergirded by a national Episcopal Church headed by a black bishop, was the vision espoused by Crummell. He traveled extensively in the United States urging blacks to immigrate to Liberia and support the work of the Church there.

On returning to Liberia, he worked to establish a national Episcopal Church. Political opposition and a loss of funding finally forced him to return to the United States. He concentrated his efforts on establishing a strong urban presence of independent black congregations that would be centers of worship, education and social service. When southern bishops proposed that a separate missionary district be created for black congregations, Crummell created a national convocation to fight the proposal. The Union of Black Episcopalians is an outgrowth of that organization.

Crummell’s ministry spanned more than half a century and three continents. Everywhere, at all times, he labored to prepare his people and to build institutions that would serve them and provide scope for the exercises of their gifts in leadership and creativity. His faith in God, his perseverance in spite of repeated discouragement, his perception that the Church transcended the racism and limited vision of its rulers, and his unflinching belief in the goodness and greatness of black people are the legacy of this Afro-American pioneer.

John Henry Hobart *September 12*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to Titus (1:7-9)

For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 78:3-7

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

- 3 That which we have heard and known,
 and what our forefathers have told us, *
 we will not hide from their children.
- 4 We will recount to generations to come
 the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the LORD, *
 and the wonderful works he has done.

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

- 5 He gave his decrees to Jacob
 and established a law for Israel, *
 which he commanded them to teach their children;
- 6 That the generations to come might know,
 and the children yet unborn; *
 that they in their turn might tell it to their children;

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

- 7 So that they might put their trust in God, *
 and not forget the deeds of God,
 but keep his commandments.

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (17:11b-19)*

Jesus said, “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.”

The Gospel of the Lord

John Henry Hobart was one of the leaders who revived the Episcopal Church, following the first two decades of its independent life after the American Revolution, a time that has been described as one of “suspended animation.” Born in Philadelphia, September 14, 1775, Hobart was educated at the Universities of Pennsylvania and Princeton, graduating from the latter in 1793. Bishop William White, his longtime friend and adviser, ordained him deacon in 1798 and priest in 1801.

After serving parishes in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Long Island, Hobart became assistant minister of Trinity Church, New York City, in 1800. He was consecrated Assistant Bishop of New York on May 29, 1811. Five years later he succeeded Bishop Benjamin Moore, both as diocesan bishop and as rector of Trinity Church. He died at Auburn, New York, September 12, 1830, and was buried beneath the chancel of Trinity Church in New York City.

Within his first four years as bishop, Hobart doubled the number of his clergy and quadrupled the number of missionaries. Before his death, he had planted a church in almost every major town of New York State and had opened missionary work among the Oneida Indians. He was one of the founders of the General Theological Seminary, and the reviver of Geneva, now Hobart, College.

A strong and unbending upholder of Church standards, Hobart established the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society of New York, and was one of the first American Churchmen to produce theological and devotional manuals for the laity. These “tracts,” as they were called, and the personal impression he made on the occasion of a visit to Oxford, were an influence on the development of the Tractarian Movement in England. Both friends and foes respected Hobart for his staunch faith, his consuming energy, his personal integrity, and his missionary zeal.

St. Cyprian of Carthage *September 13*

A Reading from the first Letter of Peter (5:1-4,10-11)

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 116:10-17

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

- 10 How shall I repay the LORD *
for all the good things he has done for me?
11 I will lift up the cup of salvation *
and call upon the Name of the LORD.

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

- 12 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people.
13 Precious in the sight of the LORD *
is the death of his servants.

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

- 14 O LORD, I am your servant; *
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.
15 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and call upon the Name of the LORD.

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

- 16 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
in the presence of all his people,
17 In the courts of the LORD'S house, *
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Hallelujah!

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (10:11-16)*

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care 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 the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd."

The Gospel of the Lord

Cyprian was a rich, aristocratic, and cultivated rhetorician in North Africa. He was converted to Christianity about 246, and by 248 was chosen Bishop of Carthage. A year later, in the persecution under the Emperor Decius, Cyprian went into hiding. For this he was severely criticized. Nonetheless, he kept in touch with his Church by letter, and directed it with wisdom and compassion. In the controversy over what to do with those who had lapsed during the persecution, Cyprian held that they could be reconciled to the Church after suitable periods of penance, the gravity of the lapse determining the length of the penance. His moderate position was the one that generally prevailed in the Church, over that of the rigorist Novatian, who led a group into schism at Rome and Antioch over this question. In another persecution, under the Emperor Valerian, Cyprian was placed under house arrest in Carthage, and, on September 14, 258, he was beheaded.

Many of Cyprian's writings have been preserved. His Letter No. 63 contains one of the earliest affirmations that the priest, in offering the Eucharist ("the sacrifice"), acts in the place of Christ, imitating his actions.

In his treatise, *On the Lord's Prayer*, he wrote: "We say 'Hallowed be thy Name,' not that we want God to be made holy by our prayers, but because we seek from the Lord that his Name may be made holy in us, ... so that we who have been made holy in Baptism may persevere in what we have begun to be."

Although there is some question whether his book, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*, affirms papal primacy, there is no question about the clarity of his statements on the unity of the college of bishops and the sin of schism. "The episcopate is a single whole," he wrote, "in which each bishop's share gives him a right to, and a responsibility for, the whole. So is the Church a single whole, though she spreads far and wide into a multitude of Churches ... If you leave the Church of Christ you will not come to Christ's rewards, you will be an alien, an outcast, an enemy. You cannot have God for your Father unless you have the Church for your Mother."

HOLY CROSS DAY *September 14*

A Reading from the Letter Paul to the Galatians (6:14-18)

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 98:1-4

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song, *
for he has done marvelous things.
- 2 With his right hand and his holy arm *
has he won for himself the victory.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

- 3 The LORD has made known his victory; *
his righteousness has he openly shown in
the sight of the nations.
- 4 He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to
the house of Israel, *
and all the ends of the earth have seen the
victory of our God.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (12:31-36a)*

Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to

die. The crowd answered him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” Jesus said to them, “The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.” After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

The Gospel of the Lord

The historian Eusebius, in his *Life of Constantine*, tells how that emperor ordered the erection of a complex of buildings in Jerusalem “on a scale of imperial magnificence,” to set forth as “an object of attraction and veneration to all, the blessed place of our Savior’s resurrection.” The overall supervision of the work—on the site where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands—was entrusted to Constantine’s mother, the empress Helena. In Jesus’ time, the hill of Calvary had stood outside the city; but when the Roman city which succeeded Jerusalem, Aelia Capitolina, was built, the hill was buried under tons of fill. It was during the excavations directed by Helena that a relic, believed to be that of the true cross, was discovered.

Constantine’s shrine included two principal buildings: a large basilica, used for the Liturgy of the Word, and a circular church, known as “The Resurrection”—its Altar placed on the site of the tomb—which was used for the Liturgy of the Table, and for the singing of the Daily Office.

Toward one side of the courtyard which separated the two buildings, and through which the faithful had to pass on their way from Word to Sacrament, the exposed top of Calvary’s hill was visible. It was there that the solemn veneration of the cross took place on Good Friday; and it was there that the congregation gathered daily for a final prayer and dismissal after Vespers.

The dedication of the buildings was completed on September 14, 335, the seventh month of the Roman calendar, a date suggested by the account of the dedication of Solomon’s temple in the same city, in the seventh month of the Jewish Calendar, hundreds of years before (2Chronicles 7:8–10).

St. Ninian *September 16*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (10:21-35)

So Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?" They answered, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging. The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa accompanied him. The following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. On Peter's arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him. But Peter made him get up, saying, "Stand up; I am only a mortal." And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled; and he said to them, "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?" Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this very hour, at three o'clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazzling clothes stood before me. He said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' Therefore I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say." Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 97:1-2,7-12

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 1 The LORD is King; let the earth rejoice; *
 let the multitude of the isles be glad.

- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him, *
righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 7 Confounded be all who worship carved images
and delight in false gods! *
Bow down before him, all you gods.
8 Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, *
because of your judgments, O LORD.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 9 For you are the LORD,
most high over all the earth; *
you are exalted far above all gods.
10 The LORD loves those who hate evil; *
he preserves the lives of his saints
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

- 11 Light has sprung up for the righteous, *
and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.
12 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, *
and give thanks to his holy Name.

The Lord preserves the lives of his saints.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (28:16-20)*

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The Gospel of the Lord

The dates of Ninian's life, and the exact extent of his work, are much disputed. The earliest, and possibly the best, account is the brief one in the Venerable Bede's Ecclesiastical History.

Ninian was a Romanized Briton, born in the latter half of the fourth century in southern Scotland. He is said to have been educated in Rome and to have received episcopal ordination. But the main influence on his life was Martin of Tours, with whom he spent some time, and from whom he gained his ideals of an episcopal-monastic structure designed for missionary work.

About the time of Martin's death in 397, Ninian established his base at a place called Candida Casa ("White House") or Whithorn in Galloway, which he dedicated to Martin. Traces of place names and church dedications suggest that his work covered the Solway Plains and the Lake District of England. Ninian seems also to have converted many of the Picts of northern Scotland, as far north as The Moray Firth.

Ninian, together with Patrick, is one of the links of continuity between the ancient Roman-British Church and the developing Celtic Christianity of Ireland and Scotland.

St. Hildegard Bingen *September 17*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Colossians (3:14-17)

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 104:25-34

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 25 O LORD, how manifold are your works! *
in wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
- 26 Yonder is the great and wide sea
with its living things too many to number, *
creatures both small and great.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 27 There move the ships,
and there is that Leviathan, *
which you have made for the sport of it.
- 28 All of them look to you *
to give them their food in due season.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 29 You give it to them; they gather it; *
you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.
- 30 You hide your face, and they are terrified; *
you take away their breath,
and they die and return to their dust.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 31 You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; *
and so you renew the face of the earth.
- 32 May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; *
may the LORD rejoice in all his works.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 33 He looks at the earth and it trembles; *
he touches the mountains and they smoke.
- 34 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; *
I will praise my God while I have my being.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (3:16-21)*

Jesus said, "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. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

The Gospel of the Lord

Hildegard of Bingen, born in 1098 in the lush Rhineland Valley, was a mystic, poet, composer, dramatist, doctor, scientist. Her parents' tenth child, she was tithed to the Church and raised by the anchoress Jutta in a cottage near the Benedictine monastery of Disibodenberg.

Drawn by the life of silence and prayer, other women joined them, finding the freedom, rare outside women's religious communities, to develop their intellectual gifts. They organized as a convent under the authority of the abbot of Disibodenberg, with Jutta as abbess. When Jutta died, Hildegard, then 38, became abbess. Later she founded independent convents at Bingen (1150) and Eibingen (1165), with the Archbishop of Mainz as her only superior.

From childhood, Hildegard experienced dazzling spiritual visions. At 43, a voice commanded her to tell what she saw. So began an outpouring of extraordinarily original writings illustrated by unusual and wondrous illuminations. These works abound with feminine imagery for God and God's creative activity. In 1147, Bernard of Clairvaux recommended her first book of visions, *Scivias*, to Pope Eugenius III, leading to papal authentication at the Synod of Trier. Hildegard became famous, eagerly sought for counsel, a correspondent of kings and queens, abbots and abbesses, archbishops and popes.

She carried out four preaching missions in northern Europe, unprecedented activity for a woman. She practiced medicine, focusing on women's needs; published treatises on natural science and philosophy; wrote a liturgical drama, *The Play of the Virtues*, in which personified virtues sing their parts and the devil, condemned to live without music, can only speak. For Hildegard, music was essential to worship. Her liturgical compositions, unusual in structure and tonality, were described by contemporaries as "chant of surpassing sweet melody" and "strange and unheard-of music."

Hildegard lived in a world accustomed to male governance. Yet, within her convents, and to a surprising extent outside them, she exercised a commanding spiritual authority based on confidence in her visions and considerable political astuteness. When she died in 1179 at 81, she left a rich legacy which speaks eloquently across the ages.

Edward Bouverie Pusey *September 18*

A Reading from the first Letter of Peter (2:19-23)

For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 106:1-5

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

- 1 Hallelujah!
 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, *
 for his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Who can declare the mighty acts of the LORD *
 or show forth all his praise?
- 3 Happy are those who act with justice *
 and always do what is right!

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

- 4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favor you have
 for your people, *
 and visit me with your saving help;
- 5 That I may see the prosperity of your elect
 and be glad with the gladness of your people, *
 that I may glory with your inheritance.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (3:10-14)*

And the crowds asked Jesus, “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

The Gospel of the Lord

The revival of High Church teachings and practices in the Anglican Communion, known as the Oxford Movement, found its acknowledged leader in Edward Bouverie Pusey. Born near Oxford, August 22, 1800, Pusey spent all his scholarly life in that University as Regius Professor of Hebrew and as Canon of Christ Church. At the end of 1833 he joined Keble and Newman in producing the Tracts for the Times, which gave the Oxford Movement its popular name of Tractarianism.

His most influential activity, however, was his preaching—catholic in content, evangelical in his zeal for souls. But to many of his more influential contemporaries it seemed dangerously innovative. A sermon preached before the University in 1843 on “The Holy Eucharist, a Comfort to the Penitent” was condemned without his being given an opportunity to defend it, and he himself was suspended from preaching for two years—a judgment he bore most patiently. His principles were thus brought before the public, and attention was drawn to the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. From another University sermon, on “The Entire Absolution of the Penitent,” may be dated the revival of private confession in the Anglican Communion.

When Newman defected to the Church of Rome in 1845, Pusey’s adherence to the Church of England kept many from following, and he defended them in their teachings and practices.

After the death of his wife in 1839, Pusey devoted much of his family fortune to the establishment of churches for the poor, and much of his time and care to the establishment of sisterhoods. In 1845, he established the first Anglican sisterhood since the Reformation. It was at this community’s convent, Ascot Priory in Berkshire, that Pusey died on September 16, 1882. His body was brought back to Christ Church and buried in the cathedral nave. Pusey House, a house of studies founded after his death, perpetuates his name at Oxford. His own erudition and integrity gave stability to the Oxford Movement and won many to its principles.

St. Theodore of Tarsus *September 19*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (2:1-5,10)

You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 71:18-23

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

18 And now that I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not
forsake me, *

till I make known your strength to this generation
and your power to all who are to come.

19 Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens; *
you have done great things;
who is like you, O God?

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

20 You have showed me great troubles and adversities, *
but you will restore my life
and bring me up again from the deep places of the earth.

21 You strengthen me more and more; *
you enfold and comfort me,

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

22 Therefore I will praise you upon the lyre for your
faithfulness, O my God; *

I will sing to you with the harp, O Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips will sing with joy when I play to you, *
and so will my soul, which you have redeemed.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (8:23-27)*

And when Jesus got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

The Gospel of the Lord

Theodore was born in 602 in Saint Paul's native city, Tarsus in Asia Minor. He was ordained Archbishop of Canterbury by Pope Vitalian on March 26, 668.

A learned monk of the East, Theodore was residing in Rome when the English Church, decimated by plague, and torn with strife over rival Celtic and Roman customs, was in need of strong leadership. Theodore provided this for a generation, beginning his episcopate at an age when most people are ready to retire.

When Theodore came to England, he established a school at Canterbury that gained a reputation for excellence in all branches of learning, and where many leaders of both the Irish and the English Churches were trained. His effective visitation of all England brought unity to the two strains of tradition among the Anglo-Saxon Christians. For example, he recognized Chad's worthiness and regularized his episcopal ordination.

Theodore gave definitive boundaries to English dioceses, so that their bishops could give better pastoral attention to their people. He presided over synods that brought about reforms, according to established rules of canon law. He also laid the foundations of the parochial organization that still obtains in the English Church.

According to Bede, Theodore was the first archbishop whom all the English obeyed, and possibly to no other leader does English Christianity owe so much. He died in his eighty-eighth year, September 19, 690, and was buried, with Augustine and the other early English archbishops, in the monastic Church of Saints Peter and Paul at Canterbury.

SAINT MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST *September 21*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (3:14-17)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 119:33-40

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, *
and I shall keep it to the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law; *
I shall keep it with all my heart.

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

35 Make me go in the path of your commandments, *
for that is my desire.

36 Incline my heart to your decrees *
and not to unjust gain.

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

37 Turn my eyes from watching what is worthless; *
give me life in your ways.

38 Fulfill your promise to your servant, *
which you make to those who fear you.

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

- 39 Turn away the reproach which I dread, *
because your judgments are good.
- 40 Behold, I long for your commandments; *
in your righteousness preserve my life.

Incline my heart, O Lord, to your decrees.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (9:9-13)*

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

The Gospel of the Lord

Matthew, one of Jesus' disciples, is probably to be identified with Levi, a tax collector ("publican") mentioned by Mark and Luke. In the Gospel according to Matthew, it is said that Matthew was seated in the custom-house when Jesus bade him, "Follow me." When Jesus called him, he at once left everything, followed the Master, and later gave a dinner for him. Mark and Luke also note that Levi was a tax collector. In all three accounts, Jesus is severely criticized for eating at the same table with tax collectors and other disreputable persons.

Tax collectors were viewed as collaborators with the Roman State, extortioners who took money from their own people to further the cause of Rome and to line their own pockets. They were spurned as traitors and outcasts. The Jews so abhorred them that pious Pharisees refused to marry into a family that had a publican as a member. Clearly, Matthew was hardly the type of man that a devout Jew would have had among his closest associates. Yet Jesus noted that it was the publican rather than the proud Pharisee who prayed the acceptable prayer, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." There is frequent favorable reference to publicans in the many sayings of Jesus in the Gospel according to Matthew.

Matthew was called early in Jesus' ministry, but that he wrote the Gospel that bears his name is seriously doubted by scholars. It is, however, generally accepted that his "logia" or "sayings of Jesus" have been included in that Gospel.

It may be that the author of the First Gospel took from Matthew's work some of the numerous parables and comments that make that Gospel so popular a source for homilies and teaching. Through this Gospel, especially, Jesus speaks not only of faith and eternal life, but of duties toward one's neighbors, family, and even enemies.

Tradition has it that Matthew, having converted many persons to Christianity in Judea, traveled to the East; but there is no certain evidence for this. He has been venerated as a martyr, but the time and circumstances of his death are unknown.

OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM *September 24*

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (7:10-16a)

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good."

The Word of the Lord

Canticle 15: Luke 1:46-55

The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name!

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name!

He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name!

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name!

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name!

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (1:26-38a)*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

The Gospel of the Lord

Our Lady of Walsingham is a title used for Mary, the mother of Jesus, as the patroness of England and English-speaking peoples. The title derives from the belief that Mary appeared in a vision to Richeldis de Faverches, a devout English noblewoman, in 1061 in the village of Walsingham in Norfolk. Richeldis was married to the Lord of the Manor of Walsingham Parva, though he died leaving her a young widow with a son, Geoffrey.

We know that Richeldis had a deep faith in God and devotion to Mary. We know too of her reputation for good works in care and generosity towards those around her. For Richeldis the life of prayer and good works was rewarded by a vision in the year 1061. In this vision she was taken by Mary to be shown the house in Nazareth where Gabriel had announced the news of the birth of Jesus. Mary asked Richeldis to build an exact replica of that house in Walsingham. This is how Walsingham became known as England's Nazareth. The vision was repeated three times, according to legend, and retold through a fifteenth century ballad. The materials given by Richeldis were finally constructed miraculously one night into the Holy House, while she kept a vigil of prayer.

Royal patronage helped the Shrine to grow in wealth and popularity, receiving visits from many kings including Henry VIII, who with his suppression of monasteries as part of the English Reformation, finally brought about its destruction in 1538. After nearly four hundred years, the 20th century saw the restoration of pilgrimage to Walsingham. While in 1897, a Roman Catholic pilgrimage was restored, Anglican interest was ignited in this pre-Reformation pilgrimage in 1921 by Fr. Hope Patten, Vicar of Walsingham. It was his idea to base a new statue of Our Lady of Walsingham on the image depicted on the seal of the medieval Priory. In 1922, this statue was set up in the Parish Church of St. Mary, and regular pilgrimage devotion followed. From the first night that the statue was placed there, people gathered around it to pray, asking Mary to join her powerful prayer with theirs. This work of intercession continues to this day. Throughout the 1920's, the trickle of pilgrims became a flood of large numbers and in 1931 a new Holy House encased in a small pilgrimage church was dedicated, and the statue translated there with great solemnity.

In the United States the National Shrine to Our Lady of Walsingham for the Episcopal Church is located in Grace Church, Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Consecrated in 1931 it is believed to be the first shrine to Our Lady dedicated in any Anglican parish church in the United States.

St. Sergius of Radonezh *September 25*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (2:15-17)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world. And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 87

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

- 1 On the holy mountain stands the city he has founded; *
the LORD loves the gates of Zion
more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
- 2 Glorious things are spoken of you, *
O city of our God.

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

- 3 I count Egypt and Babylon among those who know me; *
behold Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia:
in Zion were they born.
- 4 Of Zion it shall be said, “Everyone was born in her, *
and the Most High himself shall sustain her.”

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

- 5 The LORD will record as he enrolls the peoples, *
“These also were born there.”
- 6 The singers and the dancers will say, *
“All my fresh springs are in you.”

The Most High himself shall sustain us.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (8:16-21)*

Jesus said, “No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed, nor is anything secret that will not become known and come to light. Then pay attention to how you listen; for to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away.” Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.” But he said to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

The Gospel of the Lord

To the people of Russia, Sergius is a national hero and their patron saint. He was born at Rostov, about 1314.

Civil war in Russia forced Sergius' family to leave the city and to live by farming at Radonezh near Moscow. At the age of twenty, he and his brother began a life of seclusion in a nearby forest, from which developed the Monastery of the Holy Trinity, a center of revival of Russian Christianity. There Sergius remained for the rest of his life, refusing higher advancement, such as the see of Moscow, in 1378.

Sergius' firm support of Prince Dimitri Donskoi helped to rally the Russians against their Tartar overlords. Dimitri won a decisive victory against them at the Kulikovo Plains in 1380, and laid the foundation of his people's independent national life.

Sergius was simple and gentle in nature, mystical in temperament, and eager to ensure that his monks should serve the needs of their neighbors. He was able to inspire intense devotion to the Orthodox faith. He died in 1392, and pilgrims still visit his shrine at the monastery of Zagorsk, which he founded in 1340. The city contains several splendid cathedrals and is the residence of the Patriarch of Moscow.

The Russian Church observes Sergius' memory on September 25. His name is familiar to Anglicans from the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, a society established to promote closer relations between the Anglican and Russian Churches.

SAINT MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS *September 29*

A Reading from the Book of Revelation (12:7-12)

And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 103:19-22

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

- 19 The LORD has set his throne in heaven, *
and his kingship has dominion over all.
20 Bless the LORD, you angels of his,
you mighty ones who do his bidding, *
and hearken to the voice of his word.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

- 21 Bless the LORD, all you his hosts, *
you ministers of his who do his will.
22 Bless the LORD, all you works of his,
in all places of his dominion; *
bless the LORD, O my soul.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (1:47-51)*

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.” And he said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

The Gospel of the Lord

The scriptural word “angel” (Greek: *angelos*) means, literally, a messenger. Messengers from God can be visible or invisible, and may assume human or non-human forms. Christians have always felt themselves to be attended by healthful spirits—swift, powerful, and enlightening. Those beneficent spirits are often depicted in Christian art in human form, with wings to signify their swiftness and spacelessness, with swords to signify their power, and with dazzling raiment to signify their ability to enlighten. Unfortunately, this type of pictorial representation has led many to dismiss the angels as “just another mythical beast, like the unicorn, the griffin, or the sphinx.”

Of the many angels spoken of in the Bible, only four are called by name: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael. The Archangel Michael is the powerful agent of God who wards off evil from God’s people, and delivers peace to them at the end of this life’s mortal struggle. “Michaelmas,” as his feast is called in England, has long been one of the popular celebrations of the Christian Year in many parts of the world.

Michael is the patron saint of countless churches, including Mont Saint-Michel, the monastery fortress off the coast of Normandy that figured so prominently in medieval English history, and Coventry Cathedral, England’s most famous modern church building, rising from the ashes of the most devastating war of our time.

St. Jerome *September 30*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (3:14-17)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 119:97-104

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

97 Oh, how I love your law! *

all the day long it is in my mind.

98 Your commandment has made me wiser than my enemies, *

and it is always with me.

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, *

for your decrees are my study.

100 I am wiser than the elders, *

because I observe your commandments.

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

101 I restrain my feet from every evil way, *

that I may keep your word.

102 I do not shrink from your judgments, *

because you yourself have taught me.

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

103 How sweet are your words to my taste! *
they are sweeter than honey to my mouth.

104 Through your commandments I gain understanding; *
therefore I hate every lying way.

Your words are sweeter than honey, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (24:44-48)*

Then Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Jerome was the foremost biblical scholar of the ancient Church. His Latin translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek texts known as the Vulgate version, along with his commentaries and homilies on the biblical books, have made him a major intellectual force in the Western Church.

Jerome was born in the north Italian town of Stridon about 347, and was converted and baptized during his student days in Rome. On a visit to Trier, he found himself attracted to the monastic life, which he tested in a brief but unhappy experience as a hermit in the desert of Syria. At Antioch in 378, he reluctantly allowed himself to be ordained a presbyter, and there continued his studies in Hebrew and Greek. The following year he was in Constantinople as a student of Gregory of Nazianzus. From 382 to 384 he was secretary to Pope Damasus I in Rome, and spiritual director of many noble Roman ladies who were becoming interested in the monastic life. It was Damasus who set him to the task of making a new translation of the Bible into Latin—the vulgar tongue, as distinguished from the classical Greek. Hence the name of his translation, the Vulgate.

After the Pope's death, Jerome returned to the East, and established a monastery at Bethlehem, where he lived and worked until his death on September 30, 420. He was buried in a chapel beneath the Church of the Nativity, near the traditional place of our Lord's birth.

Jerome's irascible disposition, pride of learning, and extravagant promotion of asceticism involved him in many bitter controversies over both theological and exegetical questions. Yet he was candid at times in admitting his failings, and was never ambitious for churchly honors. A militant champion of orthodoxy, an indefatigable worker, and a stylist of rare gifts, Jerome was seldom pleasant, but at least he was never dull.

St. Remigius *October 1*

A Reading from the first Letter of John (4:1-6)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world. Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 135:13-21

Your renown, O Lord, endures from age to age.

- 13 O LORD, your Name is everlasting; *
 your renown, O LORD, endures from age to age.
- 14 For the LORD gives his people justice *
 and shows compassion to his servants.

Your renown, O Lord, endures from age to age.

- 15 The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, *
 the work of human hands.
- 16 They have mouths, but they cannot speak; *
 eyes have they, but they cannot see.

Your renown, O Lord, endures from age to age.

- 17 They have ears, but they cannot hear; *
neither is there any breath in their mouth.
18 Those who make them are like them, *
and so are all who put their trust in them.

Your renown, O Lord, endures from age to age.

- 19 Bless the LORD, O house of Israel; *
O house of Aaron, bless the LORD.
20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi; *
you who fear the LORD, bless the LORD.
21 Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, *
who dwells in Jerusalem.
Hallelujah!

Your renown, O Lord, endures from age to age.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (14:3-7)*

Jesus said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

The Gospel of the Lord

Remigius, also known as Remi, one of the patron saints of France, was born about 438, the son of the Count of Laon. At the age of twenty-two he became Bishop of Rheims.

Noted for his learning and holiness of life, Remigius is chiefly remembered because he converted and baptized King Clovis of the Franks on Christmas Day, 496. This event changed the religious history of Europe. Clovis, by becoming Catholic instead of Arian, as were most of the Germanic people of the time, was able to unite the Gallo-Roman population and their Christian leaders behind his expanding hegemony over the Germanic rulers of the West and to liberate Gaul from Roman domination. His conversion also made possible the cooperation the Franks gave later to Pope Gregory the Great in his evangelistic efforts for the English. Certainly, Clovis' motives in accepting Catholic Christianity were mixed, but there is no doubt of the sincerity of his decision, nor of the important role of Remigius in bringing it to pass. When Clovis was baptized, together with 3,000 of his followers, Remi gave him the well-known charge, "Worship what you have burned, and burn what you have worshiped."

The feast of Remigius is observed at Rheims on January 13, possibly the date of his death. The later date of October 1 is derived from the translation of his relics to a new abbey church by Pope Leo IX in 1049.

St. Francis of Assisi *October 4*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians (6:14-18)

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 148:7-14

Praise the Lord, all creatures of the earth.

- 7 Praise the LORD from the earth, *
 you sea-monsters and all deeps;
8 Fire and hail, snow and fog, *
 tempestuous wind, doing his will;

Praise the Lord, all creatures of the earth.

- 9 Mountains and all hills, *
 fruit trees and all cedars;
10 Wild beasts and all cattle, *
 creeping things and wingèd birds;

Praise the Lord, all creatures of the earth.

- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, *
 princes and all rulers of the world;
12 Young men and maidens, *
 old and young together.

Praise the Lord, all creatures of the earth.

- 13 Let them praise the Name of the LORD, *
for his Name only is exalted,
his splendor is over earth and heaven.
- 14 He has raised up strength for his people
and praise for all his loyal servants, *
the children of Israel, a people who are near him.
Hallelujah!

Praise the Lord, all creatures of the earth.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (11:25-30)*

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The Gospel of the Lord

Francis, the son of a prosperous merchant of Assisi, was born in 1182. His early youth was spent in harmless revelry and fruitless attempts to win military glory.

Various encounters with beggars and lepers pricked the young man's conscience, and he decided to embrace a life devoted to Lady Poverty. Despite his father's intense opposition, Francis totally renounced all material values, and devoted himself to serve the poor. In 1210 Pope Innocent III confirmed the simple Rule for the Order of Friars Minor, a name Francis chose to emphasize his desire to be numbered among the "least" of God's servants.

The order grew rapidly all over Europe. But by 1221 Francis had lost control of it, since his ideal of strict and absolute poverty, both for the individual friars and for the order as a whole, was found to be too difficult to maintain. His last years were spent in much suffering of body and spirit, but his unconquerable joy never failed.

Not long before his death, during a retreat on Mount La Verna, Francis received, on September 14, Holy Cross Day, the marks of the Lord's wounds, the stigmata, in his own hands and feet and side. Pope Gregory IX, a former patron of the Franciscans, canonized Francis in 1228, and began the erection of the great basilica in Assisi where Francis is buried.

Of all the saints, Francis is the most popular and admired, but probably the least imitated; few have attained to his total identification with the poverty and suffering of Christ. Francis left few writings; but, of these, his spirit of joyous faith comes through most truly in the "Canticle of the Sun," which he composed at Clare's convent of St. Damian's. The Hymnal version begins:

Most High, omnipotent, good Lord,
To thee be ceaseless praise outpoured,
And blessing without measure.
Let creatures all give thanks to thee
And serve in great humility

St. Philip the Deacon and Evangelist *October 11*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (8:26-40)

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 67

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

- 1 May God be merciful to us and bless us, *
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

- 2 Let your ways be known upon earth, *
your saving health among all nations.
- 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
- 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, *
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

- 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
- 6 The earth has brought forth her increase; *
may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
- 7 May God give us his blessing, *
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

Let the peoples praise you, O God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (28:18-20)*

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Philip, who has been traditionally referred to as a Deacon and an Evangelist, was one of seven honest men appointed, some sources say ordained, by the apostles to distribute bread and alms to the widows and the poor in Jerusalem.

After the martyrdom of Stephen, Philip went to Samaria to preach the gospel. In his travels south to Gaza he encountered an Ethiopian eunuch, a servant of the Ethiopian queen, reading the Isaiah text on the Suffering Servant. They traveled together, and in the course of their journey the Ethiopian was converted and baptized by Philip.

Subsequently, Philip traveled as a missionary from Ashdod northwards and settled in Caesarea. It was in Caesarea that he hosted St. Paul. Philip's activities at the end of his life are the subject of speculation, but some sources place him as a bishop at Lydia in Asia Minor. His feast day in the Eastern Church is October 11, and in the West usually June 6. Other provinces of the Anglican Communion also keep his feast on October 11.

St. Teresa of Avila *October 15*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul 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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 42:1-7

My soul longs for you, O God.

- 1 As the deer longs for the water-brooks, *
 so longs my soul for you, O God.
- 2 My soul is athirst for God, athirst for the living God; *
 when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?

My soul longs for you, O God.

- 3 My tears have been my food day and night, *
 while all day long they say to me,
 “Where now is your God?”
- 4 I pour out my soul when I think on these things: *
 how I went with the multitude and led them into the
 house of God,
- 5 With the voice of praise and thanksgiving, *
 among those who keep holy-day.

My soul longs for you, O God.

- 6 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? *
and why are you so disquieted within me?
- 7 Put your trust in God; *
for I will yet give thanks to him,
who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

My soul longs for you, O God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (5:13-16)*

Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Gospel of the Lord

Teresa was one of two women declared a “Doctor of the Church” in 1970, primarily because of her two mystical contemplative works, *The Way of Perfection* and *Interior Castle*. She was a close spiritual and personal friend of St. John of the Cross.

Teresa was born near Avila. Even in her childhood, she took much pleasure in the study of saints’ lives, and she used to delight in spending times of contemplation, repeating over and over “For ever, for ever, for ever, for ever, they shall see God.” In her autobiography Teresa tells that, following her mother’s death, she became quite worldly. To offset this, her father placed her in an Augustinian convent to be educated, but serious illness ended her studies. During convalescence, she determined to enter the religious life; and, though opposed by her father, she became a postulant at a Carmelite convent. Again, illness forced her to return home. After three years, she returned to the convent.

The easygoing life of the “mitigated” Carmelite rule distracted her from her customary prayer life, to which she returned. Taking recourse in two great penitents, Augustine of Hippo and Mary Magdalene, she became increasingly meditative. She began to receive visions—whether from God or the Devil she could not know—and struggled to reject them.

Teresa set out to establish a reformed Carmelite order of the “discalced” religious, who wore sandals or went unshod. Despite many setbacks she traveled for 25 years through Spain. Energetic, practical, efficient, as well as being a mystic and ascetic, she established 17 convents of Reformed Carmelites. Even imprisonment did not deter her.

Despite the demands of her administrative and missionary work, Teresa found time to write the numerous letters that give us rare insights into her personality and concerns. She shows us a practical organizer, a writer of native genius, a warm devoted friend, and, above all, a lover of and the beloved of God.

Her death, following two years of illness, was peaceful. Her last sight was of the Sacrament brought for her comfort; her last words, “O my Lord! Now is the time that we may see each other.”

St. Ignatius of Antioch *October 17*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (8:35-39)

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 31:1-5

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 1 In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame; *
deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.
- 4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *
for you are my tower of strength.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me,
O LORD, O God of truth.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (12:23-26)*

Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Ignatius of Antioch, martyred in 115, had a profound sense of two ends—his own, and the consummation of history in Jesus Christ. In ecstasy, he saw his impending martyrdom as the fitting conclusion to a long episcopate. He was accounted the second Bishop of Antioch in Syria.

Seven authentic letters which Ignatius wrote to Churches while he journeyed across Asia Minor in the custody of ten soldiers (“my leopards,” he called them), give valuable insights into the life of the early Church. Of certain Gnostic teachings that exalted the divinity of Jesus at the expense of his humanity, Ignatius wrote: “Be deaf ... to any talk that ignores Jesus Christ, of David’s lineage, of Mary; who was really born, ate, and drank; was really persecuted under Pontius Pilate; was really crucified and died in the sight of heaven and earth and the underworld. He was really raised from the dead.”

In another, he condemned a form of biblicism espoused by some as the method of historical interpretation and the only rule of Church practice. He wrote: “When I heard some people saying, ‘If I don’t find it in the ancient documents, I don’t believe it in the Gospel,’ I answered them, ‘But it is written there.’ They retorted, ‘That has got to be proved.’ But to my mind it is Jesus Christ who is the ancient documents.”

Ignatius maintained that the Church’s unity would always spring from that liturgy by which all are initiated into Christ through Baptism. He exhorted: “Try to gather more frequently to celebrate God’s Eucharist and to praise him ... At these meetings you should heed the bishop and presbytery attentively and break one loaf, which is the medicine of immortality ...

Ignatius regarded the Church as God’s holy order in the world. He was, therefore, concerned for the proper ordering of the Church’s teaching and worship. He wrote: “Flee from schism as the source of mischief. You should all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ did the Father. Follow, too, the presbytery as you would the apostles; and respect the deacons as you would God’s law ... Where the bishop is present, there let the congregation gather, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST *October 18*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (4:5-13)

As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing. Do your best to come to me soon, for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry. I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 147:1-7

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

- 1 Hallelujah!
How good it is to sing praises to our God! *
how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!
- 2 The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem; *
he gathers the exiles of Israel.

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

- 3 He heals the brokenhearted *
and binds up their wounds.
- 4 He counts the number of the stars *
and calls them all by their names.

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

5 Great is our LORD and mighty in power; *
there is no limit to his wisdom.

6 The LORD lifts up the lowly, *
but casts the wicked to the ground.

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; *
make music to our God upon the harp.

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (4:14-21)*

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

The Gospel of the Lord

Luke was a Gentile, a physician, and one of Paul's fellow missionaries in the early spread of Christianity through the Roman world. He has been identified as the writer of both the Gospel which bears his name, and its sequel, the Acts of the Apostles. He had apparently not known Jesus, but was clearly much inspired by hearing about him from those who had known him.

Luke wrote in Greek, so that Gentiles might learn about the Lord, whose life and deeds so impressed him. In the first chapter of his Gospel, he makes clear that he is offering authentic knowledge about Jesus' birth, ministry, death, and resurrection. The Gospel is not a full biography—none of the Gospels are—but a history of salvation.

Only Luke provides the very familiar stories of the annunciation to Mary, of her visit to Elizabeth, of the child in the manger, the angelic host appearing to shepherds, and the meeting with the aged Simeon. Luke includes in his work six miracles and eighteen parables not recorded in the other Gospels. In Acts he tells about the coming of the Holy Spirit, the struggles of the apostles and their triumphs over persecution, of their preaching of the Good News, and the conversion and baptism of other disciples, who would extend the Church in future years.

Luke was with Paul apparently until the latter's martyrdom in Rome. What happened to Luke after Paul's death is unknown. Early tradition has it that he wrote his Gospel in Greece, and that he died at the age of eighty-four in Boeotia. Gregory of Nazianzus says that Luke was martyred, but this testimony is doubted by most scholars. In the fourth century, the Emperor Constantius ordered the supposed relics of Luke to be removed from Boeotia to Constantinople, where they could be venerated by pilgrims.

SAINT JAMES OF JERUSALEM *October 23*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (15:12-22a)

The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied, “My brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written, ‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, so that all other peoples may seek the Lord— even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things known from long ago.’ Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues.” Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 1

Our delight is in the law of the Lord.

- 1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of
the wicked, *
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!
- 2 Their delight is in the law of the LORD, *
and they meditate on his law day and night.

Our delight is in the law of the Lord.

- 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; *
everything they do shall prosper.
- 4 It is not so with the wicked; *
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

Our delight is in the law of the Lord.

- 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when
judgment comes, *
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, *
but the way of the wicked is doomed.

Our delight is in the law of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (13:54-58)*

He came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?" And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house." And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

The Gospel of the Lord

In the Gospel according to Matthew and in the Epistle to the Galatians, the James whom we commemorate today is called the Lord's brother. Other writers, following Mark's tradition, believe him to have been a cousin of Jesus. Certain apocryphal writings speak of him as a son of Joseph's first wife. Whatever his relationship to Jesus—brother, half-brother, or cousin—James was converted after the resurrection. Eventually, he became Bishop of Jerusalem.

In the first letter to the Corinthians (15:7), Paul says that James was favored with a special appearance of the Lord before the ascension. Later, James dealt cordially with Paul at Jerusalem, when the latter came there to meet Peter and the other apostles. During the Council of Jerusalem, when there was disagreement about whether Gentile converts should be circumcised, James summed up the momentous decision with these words: "My judgment is that we should impose no irksome restrictions on those Gentiles who are turning to God" (Acts 15:19).

Eusebius, quoting from an earlier church history by Hegesippus, declares that James was surnamed "the Just." He was holy, abstemious, did not cut his hair nor oil his body, and was continually on his knees in prayer, interceding for his people. "As many as came to believe did so through James," says Hegesippus.

James' success in converting many to Christ greatly perturbed some factions in Jerusalem. According to Hegesippus, they begged him to "restrain the people, for they have gone astray to Jesus, thinking him to be the Messiah ... we bear you witness that you are just ... Persuade the people that they do not go astray ... we put our trust in you." They then set James on the pinnacle of the temple, bidding him to preach to the multitude and turn them from Jesus. James, however, testified for the Lord. Thereupon, they hurled him from the roof to the pavement, and cudged him to death.

St. Alfred the Great *October 26*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians (2:13-17)

But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. For this purpose he called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 21:1-7

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

- 1 The king rejoices in your strength, O LORD; *
how greatly he exults in your victory!
- 2 You have given him his heart's desire; *
you have not denied him the request of his lips.

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

- 3 For you meet him with blessings of prosperity, *
and set a crown of fine gold upon his head.
- 4 He asked you for life, and you gave it to him: *
length of days, for ever and ever.

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

- 5 His honor is great, because of your victory; *
splendor and majesty have you bestowed upon him.
- 6 For you will give him everlasting felicity *
and will make him glad with the joy of your presence.
- 7 For the king puts his trust in the LORD; *
because of the loving-kindness of the Most High, he
will not fall.

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (6:43-49)*

Jesus said, “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks. “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I tell you? I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Alfred, alone of all English rulers, has been called “the Great,” because of his courage and Christian virtues. Born in 849 at Wantage, Berkshire, the youngest of five sons of King Aethelwulf, Alfred spent his life in a time of “battle, murder, and sudden death” during the Viking invasions and settlement in Britain. He was deeply impressed when, on a visit to Rome at the age of four, he was blessed by Pope Leo IV, and two years later when he witnessed the marriage of Aethelwulf to a young princess of the Frankish court. Following his father’s death and the short reigns of his brothers, Alfred became King in 871.

In heroic battles and by stratagems against the Danes, Alfred halted the tide of their invasion, and secured control of the southern, and part of the midland regions, of England for the English. After a decisive victory in 878 at Edington over the Danish leader Guthrum, he persuaded his foe to accept baptism. Alfred died on October 26, 899, and was buried in the old Minster at Winchester.

In his later years, Alfred sought to repair the damage that the Viking invasions had inflicted on culture and learning, especially among the parish clergy. With the help of scholars from Wales and the Continent, he supervised translations into English of important classics of theology and history, including works of Pope Gregory the Great, Augustine of Hippo, and the Venerable Bede. In one of them he commented: “He seemed to me a very foolish man, and very wretched, who will not increase his understanding while he is in the world, and ever wish and long to reach that endless life where all shall be made clear.”

SAINT SIMON AND SAINT JUDE, APOSTLES *October 28*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (2:13-22)

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. 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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 119:89-96

O Lord, your word is everlasting.

89 O LORD, your word is everlasting; *
it stands firm in the heavens.

90 Your faithfulness remains from one generation to another; *
you established the earth, and it abides.

O Lord, your word is everlasting.

91 By your decree these continue to this day, *
for all things are your servants.

92 If my delight had not been in your law, *
I should have perished in my affliction.

O Lord, your word is everlasting.

93 I will never forget your commandments, *
because by them you give me life.

94 I am yours; oh, that you would save me! *
for I study your commandments.

O Lord, your word is everlasting.

95 Though the wicked lie in wait for me to destroy me, *
I will apply my mind to your decrees.

96 I see that all things come to an end, *
but your commandment has no bounds.

O Lord, your word is everlasting.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (15:17-27)*

Jesus said, “I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘Servants are not greater than their master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’ 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord

The only thing the Gospels tell us about Simon is that he was one of the disciples, and that he was called “the Zealot” (Zelotes). John mentions Jude in his description of the Last Supper. The Epistle of Jude may be the work of the disciple Jude, who is the man mentioned by John as the brother of James the Greater.

Tradition has consistently associated Simon and Jude as apostles to Persia. Some accounts state that they were martyrs, a tradition generally accepted by the Western Church. The Monology of Basil, however, says that Simon died a peaceful death at Edessa. Jude, who was surnamed Thaddeus, has been confused with another Thaddeus, who was also said to have died a quiet death, either in Beirut or Edessa. Whatever the facts, accounts conflict and reliable data are lacking.

There are other scholarly questions about both men. One involves Simon’s appellation “Zelotes.” Whether in fact he had been a member before his conversion of one of the several factions called “Zealots,” or whether this title refers to his zeal for the Jewish law, is not known, but he has consistently been identified by it. For some centuries, and even to this day, Jude has been regarded in popular devotion as the “patron of desperate or lost causes,” but the basis of this tradition is obscure.

The Epistle of Jude concludes with this striking doxology: “Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Savior, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all time and now and for ever” (Jude 24–25).

ALL SAINTS *November 1*

A Reading from the Book of Revelation (7:2-4,9-17)

I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, saying, “Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads.” And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the people of Israel: After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.” Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 149

Sing to the Lord a new song.

- 1 Hallelujah!
Sing to the LORD a new song; *
sing his praise in the congregation of the faithful.
- 2 Let Israel rejoice in his Maker; *
let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

Sing to the Lord a new song.

- 3 Let them praise his Name in the dance; *
let them sing praise to him with timbrel and harp.
- 4 For the LORD takes pleasure in his people *
and adorns the poor with victory.

Sing to the Lord a new song.

- 5 Let the faithful rejoice in triumph; *
let them be joyful on their beds.
- 6 Let the praises of God be in their throat *
and a two-edged sword in their hand;

Sing to the Lord a new song.

- 7 To wreak vengeance on the nations *
and punishment on the peoples;
- 8 To bind their kings in chains *
and their nobles with links of iron;
- 9 To inflict on them the judgment decreed; *
this is glory for all his faithful people.
Hallelujah!

Sing to the Lord a new song.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (5:1-12)*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The Gospel of the Lord

It is believed by many scholars that the commemoration of all the saints on November first originated in Ireland, spread from there to England, and then to the continent of Europe. That it had reached Rome and had been adopted there early in the ninth century is attested by a letter of Pope Gregory IV, who reigned from 828 to 844, to Emperor Louis “the Pious,” urging that such a festival be observed throughout the Holy Roman Empire.

However, the desire of Christian people to express the intercommunion of the living and the dead in the Body of Christ by a commemoration of those who, having professed faith in the living Christ in days past, had entered into the nearer presence of their Lord, and especially of those who had crowned their profession with heroic deaths, was far older than the early Middle Ages. Gregory Thaumaturgus (the “Wonder Worker”), writing before the year 270, refers to the observance of a festival of all martyrs, though he does not date it. A hundred years later, Ephrem the Deacon mentions such an observance in Edessa on May 13; and the patriarch John Chrysostom, who died in 407, says that a festival of All Saints was observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost in Constantinople at the time of his episcopate. The contemporary lectionary of the East Syrians set a commemoration of all the saints on Friday in Easter week. On May 13, in the year 610, the Pantheon in Rome—originally a pagan temple dedicated to “all the gods”—was dedicated as the Church of St. Mary and All Martyrs.

All Saints’ Day is classed, in the Prayer Book of 1979, as a Principal Feast, taking precedence of any other day or observance. Among the seven so classified, All Saints’ Day alone may be observed on the following Sunday, in addition to its observance on its fixed date. It is one of the four days recommended in the Prayer Book (page 312) for the administration of Holy Baptism.

ALL SOULS *November 2*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians (4:13-18)

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 130

My soul waits for the Lord.

- 1 Out of the depths have I called to you, O LORD;
 LORD, hear my voice; *
 let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
- 2 If you, LORD, were to note what is done amiss, *
 O LORD, who could stand?

My soul waits for the Lord.

- 3 For there is forgiveness with you; *
 therefore you shall be feared.
- 4 I wait for the LORD; my soul waits for him; *
 in his word is my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord.

- 5 My soul waits for the LORD,
 more than watchmen for the morning, *
 more than watchmen for the morning.

- 6 O Israel, wait for the LORD, *
for with the LORD there is mercy;
7 With him there is plenteous redemption, *
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

My soul waits for the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (5:24-27)*

Jesus said, “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life. Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.”

The Gospel of the Lord

In the New Testament, the word “saints” is used to describe the entire membership of the Christian community, and in the Collect for All Saints’ Day the word “elect” is used in a similar sense. From very early times, however, the word “saint” came to be applied primarily to persons of heroic sanctity, whose deeds were recalled with gratitude by later generations.

Beginning in the tenth century, it became customary to set aside another day—as a sort of extension of All Saints—on which the Church remembered that vast body of the faithful who, though no less members of the company of the redeemed, are unknown in the wider fellowship of the Church. It was also a day for particular remembrance of family members and friends.

Though the observance of the day was abolished at the Reformation because of abuses connected with Masses for the dead, a renewed understanding of its meaning has led to a widespread acceptance of this commemoration among Anglicans, and to its inclusion as an optional observance in the calendar of the Episcopal Church.

Richard Hooker *November 3*

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (2:6-10,13-16)

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 19:1-4,7-11

The heavens declare the glory of God.

- 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, *
 and the firmament shows his handiwork.
- 2 One day tells its tale to another, *
 and one night imparts knowledge to another.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

- 3 Although they have no words or language, *
 and their voices are not heard,
- 4 Their sound has gone out into all lands, *
 and their message to the ends of the world.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect
and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the LORD is sure
and gives wisdom to the innocent.
- 8 The statutes of the LORD are just
and rejoice the heart; *
the commandment of the LORD is clear
and gives light to the eyes.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

- 9 The fear of the LORD is clean
and endures for ever; *
the judgments of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold,
more than much fine gold, *
sweeter far than honey,
than honey in the comb.
- 11 By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (17:18-23)*

Jesus prayed, "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. I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

The Gospel of the Lord

In any list of Anglican theologians, Richard Hooker's name would stand high, if not first. He was born in 1553 at Heavitree, near Exeter, and was admitted in 1567 to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, of which he became a Fellow ten years later. After ordination and marriage in 1581, he held a living in Buckinghamshire. In 1586 he became Master of the Temple, in London. Later, he served country parishes in Boscombe, Salisbury, and Bishopsbourne near Canterbury.

A controversy with a noted Puritan led Hooker to prepare a comprehensive defense of the Reformation settlement under Queen Elizabeth I. This work, his masterpiece, was entitled *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Its philosophical base is Aristotelian, with a strong emphasis upon natural law eternally planted by God in creation. On this foundation, all positive laws of Church and State are grounded—from Scriptural revelation, ancient tradition, reason, and experience.

Book Five of the *Laws* is a massive defense of the Book of Common Prayer, directed primarily against Puritan detractors. Hooker's arguments are buttressed by enormous patristic learning, but the needs of the contemporary worshiper are paramount, and he draws effectively on his twenty-year experience of using the Book. Hooker's vast learning, and the quality of his style, reveal him to be a man of moderate, patient, and serene character.

Concerning the nature of the Church, Hooker wrote: "The Church is always a visible society of men; not an assembly, but a Society. For although the name of the Church be given unto Christian assemblies, although any multitude of Christian men congregated may be termed by the name of a Church, yet assemblies properly are rather things that belong to a Church. Men are assembled for performance of public actions; which actions being ended, the assembly dissolveth itself and is no longer in being, whereas the Church which was assembled doth no less continue afterwards than before."

Pope Clement VIII is reported to have said that Hooker's work "had in it such seeds of eternity that it would abide until the last fire shall consume all learning."

St. Willibrord *November 7*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (1:1-9)

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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 115:9-15

We will bless the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

- 9 O Israel, trust in the LORD; *
he is their help and their shield.
- 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD; *
he is their help and their shield.

We will bless the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

- 11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; *
he is their help and their shield.
- 12 The LORD has been mindful of us, and he will bless us; *
he will bless the house of Israel;
he will bless the house of Aaron;

We will bless the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

- 13 He will bless those who fear the LORD, *
both small and great together.
- 14 May the LORD increase you more and more, *
you and your children after you.
- 15 May you be blessed by the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

We will bless the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (10:1-9)*

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'"

The Gospel of the Lord

We know about Willibrord's life and missionary labors through a notice in the Venerable Bede's Ecclesiastical History and a biography by his younger kinsman, Alcuin. He was born in Northumbria about 658, and from the age of seven was brought up and educated at Bishop Wilfrid's monastery at Ripon. For twelve years, 678–690, he studied in Ireland, where he acquired his thirst for missionary work.

In 690, with twelve companions, he set out for Frisia (the Netherlands), a pagan area that was increasingly coming under the domination of the Christian Franks. There Bishop Wilfrid and a few other Englishmen had made short missionary visits, but with little success. With the aid of the Frankish rulers, Willibrord established his base at Utrecht, and in 695 Pope Sergius ordained him a bishop and gave him the name of Clement.

In 698 he founded the monastery of Echternach, near Trier. His work was frequently disturbed by the conflict of the pagan Frisians with the Franks, and for a time he left the area to work among the Danes. For three years, 719–722, he was assisted by Boniface, who at a later time came back to Frisia to strengthen the mission. In a very real sense, Willibrord prepared the way for Boniface's more successful achievements by his relations with the Frankish rulers and the papacy, who thus became joint sponsors of missionary work. He died at Echternach, November 7, 739.

St. Leo the Great *November 10*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (1:6-14)

For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 77:11-16,19-20

I will remember the works of the Lord.

- 11 I will remember the works of the LORD, *
and call to mind your wonders of old time.
- 12 I will meditate on all your acts *
and ponder your mighty deeds.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

13 Your way, O God, is holy; *

who is so great a god as our God?

14 You are the God who works wonders *

and have declared your power among the peoples.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

15 By your strength you have redeemed your people, *

the children of Jacob and Joseph.

I will remember the works of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (5:13-19)*

Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

The Gospel of the Lord

When Leo was born, about the year 400, the Western Roman Empire was almost in shambles. Weakened by barbarian invasions and by a totally inefficient economic and political system, the structure that had been carefully built by Augustus had become a chaos of internal warfare, subversion, and corruption.

The social and political situation notwithstanding, Leo received a good education, and was ordained deacon, with the responsibility of looking after Church possessions, managing the grain dole, and generally administering finances. He won considerable respect for his abilities, and a contemporary of his, Cassian, described him as “the ornament of the Roman Church and the divine ministry.”

In 440, Leo was unanimously elected Pope, despite the fact that he was absent at the time on a mission in Gaul. His ability as a preacher shows clearly in the 96 sermons still extant, in which he expounds doctrine, encourages almsgiving, and deals with various heresies, including the Pelagian and the Manichean systems.

In Gaul, Africa, and Spain, Leo’s strong hand was felt as he issued orders to limit the powers of one over-presumptuous bishop, confirmed the rights of another bishop over his vicars, and selected candidates for holy orders. Leo’s letter to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 dealt so effectively with the doctrine of the human and divine natures of the One Person of Christ that the assembled bishops declared, “Peter has spoken by Leo,” and affirmed his definition as orthodox teaching. (See page 864 of the Prayer Book.)

With similar strength of spirit and wisdom, Leo negotiated with Attila when the Huns were about to sack Rome. He persuaded them to withdraw from Italy and to accept an annual tribute. Three years later, Genseric led the Vandals against Rome. Again Leo negotiated. Unable to prevent pillaging by the barbarians, he did dissuade them from burning the city and slaughtering its inhabitants. He worked, thereafter, to repair the damage, to replace the holy vessels in the desecrated churches, and to restore the morale of the Roman people.

St. Martin of Tour *November 11*

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (58:6-12)

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 15

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

- 1 LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle? *
 who may abide upon your holy hill?
- 2 Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, *
 who speaks the truth from his heart.

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

- 3 There is no guile upon his tongue;
 he does no evil to his friend; *
 he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor.

- 4 In his sight the wicked is rejected, *
but he honors those who fear the LORD.

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

- 5 He has sworn to do no wrong *
and does not take back his word.
6 He does not give his money in hope of gain, *
nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.
7 Whoever does these things *
shall never be overthrown.

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (18:18-30)*

A certain ruler asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, 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 commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother.’” He replied, “I have kept all these since my youth.” When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” He replied, “What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.” Then Peter said, “Look, we have left our homes and followed you.” And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Martin, one of the patron saints of France, was born about 330 at Sabaria, the modern Szombathely in Hungary. His early years were spent in Pavia in Italy. After a term of service in the Roman army, he traveled about Europe, and finally settled in Poitiers, whose bishop, Hilary, he had come to admire.

According to an old legend, while Martin was still a catechumen, he was approached by a poor man, who asked for alms in the name of Christ. Martin, drawing his sword, cut off part of his military cloak and gave it to the beggar. On the following night, Jesus appeared to Martin, clothed in half a cloak, and said to him, "Martin, a simple catechumen, covered me with this garment."

Hilary ordained Martin to the presbyterate sometime between 350 and 353, and Martin, inspired by the new monastic movement stemming from Egypt, established a hermitage at nearby Ligugé. To his dismay, he was elected Bishop of Tours in 372. He agreed to serve only if he were allowed to continue his strict, ascetic habit of life. His monastery of Marmoutier, near Tours, had a great influence on the development of Celtic monasticism in Britain, where Ninian, among others, promoted Martin's ascetic and missionary ideals. The oldest church in Canterbury, which antedates the Anglo-Saxon invasions, is dedicated to St. Martin.

Martin was unpopular with many of his episcopal colleagues, both because of his manner of life and because of his strong opposition to their violent repression of heresy. He was a diligent missionary to the pagan folk of the countryside near his hermitage, and was always a staunch defender of the poor and the helpless.

Martin died on November 11, 397. His shrine at Tours became a popular site for pilgrimages, and a secure sanctuary for those seeking protection and justice.

Samuel Seabury *November 14*

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (63:7-9)

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, “Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely”; and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 133:2-5

Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when brethren live together in unity!

- 2 It is like fine oil upon the head *
 that runs down upon the beard,
- 3 Upon the beard of Aaron, *
 and runs down upon the collar of his robe.

Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when brethren live together in unity!

- 4 It is like the dew of Hermon *
 that falls upon the hills of Zion.
- 5 For there the LORD has ordained the blessing: *
 life for evermore.

Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when brethren live together in unity!

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (9:35-38)*

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Samuel Seabury, the first Bishop of the Episcopal Church, was born in Groton, Connecticut, November 30, 1729. After ordination in England in 1753, he was assigned, as a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, to Christ Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey. In 1757, he became rector of Grace Church, Jamaica, Long Island, and in 1766 rector of St. Peter's, Westchester County.

During the American Revolution, he remained loyal to the British crown, and served as a chaplain in the British army. After the Revolution, a secret meeting of Connecticut clergymen in Woodbury, on March 25, 1783, named Seabury or the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming, whichever would be able or willing, to seek episcopal consecration in England. Leaming declined; Seabury accepted, and sailed for England.

After a year of negotiation, Seabury found it impossible to obtain episcopal orders from the Church of England because, as an American citizen, he could not swear allegiance to the crown. He then turned to the Non-juring bishops of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. On November 14, 1784, in Aberdeen, he was consecrated by the Bishop and the Bishop Coadjutor of Aberdeen and the Bishop of Ross and Caithness, in the presence of a number of the clergy and laity.

On his return home, Seabury was recognized as Bishop of Connecticut in Convocation on August 3, 1785, at Middletown. With Bishop William White, he was active in the organization of the Episcopal Church at the General Convention of 1789. With the support of William Smith of Maryland, William Smith of Rhode Island, William White of Pennsylvania, and Samuel Parker of Boston, Seabury kept his promise, made in a concordat with the Scottish bishops, to persuade the American Church to adopt the Scottish form for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

In 1790 Seabury became responsible for episcopal oversight of the churches in Rhode Island; and at the General Convention of 1792 he participated in the first consecration of a bishop on American soil, that of John Claggett of Maryland. Seabury died on February 25, 1796, and is buried beneath St. James' Church, New London.

St. Margaret of Scotland *November 16*

A Reading from the second Letter of John (1-9)

The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not only I but also all who know the truth, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, in truth and love. I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father. But now, dear lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning, let us love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning—you must walk in it. Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist! Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward. Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 112:1-9

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 1 Hallelujah!
Happy are they who fear the Lord *
and have great delight in his commandments!
- 2 Their descendants will be mighty in the land; *
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 3 Wealth and riches will be in their house, *
and their righteousness will last for ever.
- 4 Light shines in the darkness for the upright; *
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 5 It is good for them to be generous in lending *
and to manage their affairs with justice.
- 6 For they will never be shaken; *
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 7 They will not be afraid of any evil rumors; *
their heart is right;
they put their trust in the Lord.
- 8 Their heart is established and will not shrink, *
until they see their desire upon their enemies.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

- 9 They have given freely to the poor, *
and their righteousness stands fast for ever;
they will hold up their head with honor.

Happy are they who fear the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (4:16-22a)*

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”

The Gospel of the Lord

Shakespeare made familiar the names of Macbeth and Macduff, Duncan and Malcolm; but it is not always remembered that Malcolm married an English princess, Margaret, about 1070.

With considerable zeal, Margaret sought to change what she considered to be old-fashioned and careless practices among the Scottish clergy. She insisted that the observance of Lent, for example, was to begin on Ash Wednesday, rather than on the following Monday, and that the Mass should be celebrated according to the accepted Roman rite of the Church, and not in barbarous form and language. The Lord's Day was to be a day when, she said, "we apply ourselves only to prayers." She argued vigorously, though not always with success, against the exaggerated sense of unworthiness that made many of the pious Scots unwilling to receive Communion regularly.

Margaret's energies were not limited to reformation of formal Church practices. She encouraged the founding of schools, hospitals, and orphanages, and used her influence with King Malcolm to help her improve the quality of life among the isolated Scottish clans. Together, Margaret and her husband rebuilt the monastery of Iona and founded Dunfermline Abbey, under the direction of Benedictine monks.

In addition to her zeal for Church and people, Margaret was a conscientious wife and the mother of eight children. Malcolm, a strong-willed man, came to trust her judgment even in matters of State. She saw also to the spiritual welfare of her large household, providing servants with opportunity for regular worship and prayer.

Margaret was not as successful as she wished to be in creating greater unity in faith and works between her own native England and the Scots. She was unable, for example, to bring an end to the bloody warfare among the highland clans, and after her death in 1093, there was a brief return to the earlier isolation of Scotland from England. Nevertheless, her work among the people, and her reforms in the Church, made her Scotland's most beloved saint. She died on November 16, and was buried at Dunfermline Abbey.

St. Hugh of Lincoln *November 17*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to Titus (2:7-8,11-14)

Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured; then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us. 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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 61

You have been my refuge, O God.

- 1 Hear my cry, O God, *
and listen to my prayer.
- 2 I call upon you from the ends of the earth
with heaviness in my heart; *
set me upon the rock that is higher than I.

You have been my refuge, O God.

- 3 For you have been my refuge, *
a strong tower against the enemy.
- 4 I will dwell in your house for ever; *
I will take refuge under the cover of your wings.

You have been my refuge, O God.

5 For you, O God, have heard my vows; *
you have granted me the heritage of those
who fear your Name.

6 Add length of days to the king's life; *
let his years extend over many generations.

You have been my refuge, O God.

7 Let him sit enthroned before God for ever; *
bid love and faithfulness watch over him.

8 So will I always sing the praise of your Name, *
and day by day I will fulfill my vows.

You have been my refuge, O God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (12:35-44)*

Jesus said, "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. "But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour." Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?" And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions.

The Gospel of the Lord

Hugh was born into a noble family at Avalon in Burgundy (France). He became a canon regular at Villard-Benoit near Grenoble. About 1160 he joined the Carthusians, the strictest contemplative religious order, becoming the procurator of their major house, the Grande Chartreuse. With reluctance, he accepted the invitation of King Henry II to become prior of a new foundation of Carthusians in England at Witham, Somerset. With even greater hesitation, Hugh accepted the King's appointment to the See of Lincoln in 1186. He died in London, November 16, 1200, and is buried in Lincoln Cathedral, of which he laid the foundation.

As a bishop, Hugh continued to live as much as possible under the strict discipline of his order. His humility and tact, his total lack of self-regard, and his cheerful disposition made it difficult to oppose him. His people loved him for his unrelenting care of the poor and oppressed. Steadfastly independent of secular influences, he was never afraid to reprove his king for unjust treatment of the people. Hugh refused to raise money for King Richard's foreign wars. Yet Richard said of him, "If all bishops were like my Lord of Lincoln, not a prince among us could lift his head against them."

Robert Grosseteste was a distinguished scholar of law, medicine, languages, sciences, and theology, having risen to prominence from humble beginnings. He was a commentator and translator of Aristotle, but sought to refute many of Aristotle's ideas in favor of those of Augustine. Because of Grosseteste's influence, Oxford began to give greater weight to the study of science, particularly geometry, physics, and mathematics. Roger Bacon, an important progenitor of scientific method, was a pupil of Grosseteste, and John Wycliffe was strongly influenced by him as well.

He became Bishop of Lincoln in 1235. He is remembered for the diligence with which he visited the clergy and people of his diocese, teaching, preaching, and celebrating the sacraments, thus refusing to be isolated from the lives of those under his care. He was a steadfast defender of diocesan prerogatives whether against the papacy or the state.

St. Hilda of Whitby *November 18*

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (4:1-6)

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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 113

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

- 1 Hallelujah!
 Give praise, you servants of the LORD; *
 praise the Name of the LORD.
- 2 Let the Name of the LORD be blessed, *
 from this time forth for evermore.

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

- 3 From the rising of the sun to its going down *
 let the Name of the LORD be praised.
- 4 The LORD is high above all nations, *
 and his glory above the heavens.

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

- 5 Who is like the LORD our God, who sits enthroned on high, *
 but stoops to behold the heavens and the earth?
- 6 He takes up the weak out of the dust *
 and lifts up the poor from the ashes.

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

- 7 He sets them with the princes, *
with the princes of his people.
- 8 He makes the woman of a childless house *
to be a joyful mother of children.

Give praise, you servants of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (19:27-29)*

Then Peter said in reply, “Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life.

The Gospel of the Lord

“Hilda’s career falls into two equal parts,” says the Venerable Bede, “for she spent thirty-three years nobly in secular habit, while she dedicated an equal number of years still more nobly to the Lord, in the monastic life.”

Hilda, born in 614, was the grandniece of King Edwin. She was instructed by Paulinus (one of the companions of Augustine of Canterbury) in the doctrines of Christianity in preparation for her baptism at the age of thirteen. She lived, chaste and respected, at the King’s court for twenty years, and then decided to enter the monastic life. She had hoped to join the convent of Chelles in Gaul, but Bishop Aidan was so impressed by her holiness of life that he recalled her to her home country, in East Anglia, to live in a small monastic settlement.

One year after her return, Aidan appointed her Abbess of Hartlepool. There, Hilda established the rule of life that she had been taught by Paulinus and Aidan. She became renowned for her wisdom, eagerness for learning, and devotion to God’s service.

Some years later, she founded the abbey at Whitby, where both nuns and monks lived in strict obedience to Hilda’s rule of justice, devotion, chastity, peace, and charity. Known for her prudence and good sense, Hilda was sought out by kings and other public men for advice and counsel. Those living under her rule devoted so much time to the study of Scripture and to works of righteousness that many were found qualified for ordination. Several of her monks became bishops; at least one pursued further studies in Rome. She encouraged the poet Caedmon, a servant at Whitby, to become a monk and to continue his inspired writing. All who were her subjects or knew her, Bede remarks, called her “mother.”

In 663, Whitby was the site of the famous synod convened to decide divisive questions involved in the differing traditions of Celtic Christians and the followers of Roman order. Hilda favored the Celtic position, but when the Roman position prevailed she was obedient to the synod’s decision. Hilda died on November 17, 680, surrounded by her monastics, whom, in her last hour, she urged to preserve the gospel of peace.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary *November 19*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (8:7-15)

Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something— now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written, “The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalms 109:20-25

Help me, O Lord my God.

- 20 But you, O Lord my God,
oh, deal with me according to your Name; *
for your tender mercy's sake, deliver me.
- 21 For I am poor and needy, *
and my heart is wounded within me.

Help me, O Lord my God.

22 I have faded away like a shadow when it lengthens; *
I am shaken off like a locust.

23 My knees are weak through fasting, *
and my flesh is wasted and gaunt.

Help me, O Lord my God.

24 I have become a reproach to them; *
they see and shake their heads.

25 Help me, O LORD my God; *
save me for your mercy's sake.

Help me, O Lord my God.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (6:35-38)*

Jesus said, "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

The Gospel of the Lord

Elizabeth's charity is remembered in numerous hospitals that bear her name throughout the world. She was born in 1207 at Pressburg (now Bratislava), daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary, and was married in 1221 to Louis IV, Landgrave of Thuringia, to whom she bore three children. At an early age she showed concern for the poor and the sick, and was thus attracted to the Franciscans who came to the Wartburg in 1223. From them she received spiritual direction. Her husband was sympathetic to her almsgiving and allowed her to use her dowry for this purpose. During a famine and epidemic in 1226, when her husband was in Italy, she sold her jewels and established a hospital where she cared for the sick and the poor. To supply their needs, she opened the royal granaries. After her husband's death in 1227, the opposition of the court to her "extravagances" compelled her to leave the Wartburg with her children.

For some time Elizabeth lived in great distress. She then courageously took the habit of the Franciscans—the first of the Franciscan Tertiaries, or Third Order, in Germany. Finally, arrangements with her family gave her a subsistence, and she spent her remaining years in Marburg, living in self-denial, caring for the sick and needy. She died from exhaustion, November 16, 1231, and was canonized by Pope Gregory IX four years later. With Louis of France she shares the title of patron of the Third Order of St. Francis.

St. Edmund the Martyr *November 20*

A Reading from the first Letter of Peter (3:14-18)

But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 21:1-7

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

- 1 The king rejoices in your strength, O LORD; *
how greatly he exults in your victory!
- 2 You have given him his heart's desire; *
you have not denied him the request of his lips.

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

- 3 For you meet him with blessings of prosperity, *
and set a crown of fine gold upon his head.
- 4 He asked you for life, and you gave it to him: *
length of days, for ever and ever.

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

- 5 His honor is great, because of your victory; *
splendor and majesty have you bestowed upon him.
- 6 For you will give him everlasting felicity *
and will make him glad with the joy of your presence.
- 7 For the king puts his trust in the LORD; *
because of the loving-kindness of the Most High, he
will not fall.

Rejoice in the strength of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (10:16-22)*

Jesus said, "See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."

The Gospel of the Lord

Edmund ascended the throne of East Anglia at the age of fifteen, one of several monarchs who ruled various parts of England at that period in her history. The principal source of information about the martyrdom of the young king is an account by Dunstan, who became Archbishop of Canterbury ninety years after Edmund's death. Dunstan had heard the story many years before from a man who claimed to have been Edmund's armor bearer.

Edmund had reigned as a Christian king for nearly fifteen years when Danish armies invaded England in 870. Led by two brothers, Hinguar and Hubba, the Danes moved south, burning monasteries and churches, plundering and destroying entire villages, and killing hundreds. Upon reaching East Anglia, the brothers confronted Edmund and offered to share their treasure with him if he would acknowledge their supremacy, forbid all practice of the Christian faith, and become a figurehead ruler. Edmund's bishops advised him to accept the terms and avoid further bloodshed, but the king refused. He declared that he would not forsake Christ by surrendering to pagan rule, nor would he betray his people by consorting with the enemy.

Edmund's small army fought bravely against the Danes, but the king was eventually captured. According to Dunstan's account, Edmund was tortured, beaten, shot through with arrows, and finally beheaded. By tradition, the date of his death is November 20, 870.

The cult of the twenty-nine-year-old martyr grew very rapidly, and his remains were eventually enshrined in a Benedictine monastery in Bedericesworth—now called Bury St. Edmunds. Through the centuries Edmund's shrine became a traditional place of pilgrimage for England's kings, who came to pray at the grave of a man who remained steadfast in the Christian faith and loyal to the integrity of the English people.

St. Cecilia *November 22*

A Reading from the Book of Revelation (15:1-4)

Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended. And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: “Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations! Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your judgments have been revealed.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 150

Praise God in his holy temple.

- 1 Hallelujah!
 Praise God in his holy temple; *
 praise him in the firmament of his power.
- 2 Praise him for his mighty acts; *
 praise him for his excellent greatness.

Praise God in his holy temple.

- 3 Praise him with the blast of the ram's-horn; *
 praise him with lyre and harp.
- 4 Praise him with timbrel and dance; *
 praise him with strings and pipe.

Praise God in his holy temple.

- 5 Praise him with resounding cymbals; *
praise him with loud-clanging cymbals.
- 6 Let everything that has breath *
praise the Lord.
Hallelujah!

Praise God in his holy temple.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (10:38-42)*

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

The Gospel of the Lord

Cecilia is the patron saint of singers, organ builders, musicians and poets. She is venerated as a martyr. Many of the details of her life are unknown and much of what we do know comes from later periods. She is among the women named in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

According to fifth century sources, Cecilia was of noble birth and was betrothed to a pagan who bore the name Valerian. Cecilia's witness resulted in the conversion of Valerian and his brother, Tiburtius. Because of their conversion, the brothers were martyred and while Cecilia was burying them, she too was arrested. After several failed attempts to put her to death, she died from injuries sustained by the ordeal. The date of her martyrdom is generally believed to be 230 during the Roman persecution of Christians under Alexander Severus, although some scholars have dated it earlier.

Remembered for the passion with which she sang the praises of God, Cecilia is first depicted in Christian art as a martyr, but since the fourteenth century she is often shown playing the organ, a theme picked up by Raphael in his famous altarpiece for San Giovanni in Monte, Bologna, painted around 1516. Her story has inspired centuries of artistic representations in paintings, sculptures, mosaics, and stained glass. Composers such as Handel, Purcell, Howells, and Britten have written choral works and mass settings in her honor. Many music schools, choral societies, and concert series bear her name.

In the ninth century, during the pontificate of Pope Paschal I, the remains of Cecilia were uncovered in the catacombs of Callixtus. On orders from the pope, the sarcophagus containing her remains was transferred to the new basilica in the Trastevere region of Rome. Built on what was believed to be the site of Cecilia's home, a church named in her honor had existed on the site since at least the fifth century, and perhaps as early as the late third century, one of the original churches of the City of Rome.

St. Clement of Rome *November 23*

A Reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (2:1-7)

You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules. It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 78:3-7

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

- 3 That which we have heard and known,
and what our forefathers have told us, *
we will not hide from their children.
- 4 We will recount to generations to come
the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the LORD, *
and the wonderful works he has done.

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

- 5 He gave his decrees to Jacob
and established a law for Israel, *
which he commanded them to teach their children;
- 6 That the generations to come might know,
and the children yet unborn; *
that they in their turn might tell it to their children;

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

- 7 So that they might put their trust in God, *
and not forget the deeds of God,
but keep his commandments.

Let us recount the deeds of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (6:37-45)*

Jesus said, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” He also told them a parable: “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye. “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

The Gospel of the Lord

According to early traditions, Clement was a disciple of the Apostles and the third Bishop of Rome. He is generally regarded as the author of a letter written about the year 96 from the Church in Rome to the Church in Corinth, and known as “First Clement” in the collection of early documents called “The Apostolic Fathers.”

The occasion of the letter was the action of a younger group at Corinth who had deposed the elder clergy because of dissatisfaction with their ministrations. The unity of the Church was being jeopardized by a dispute over its ministry. Clement’s letter sets forth a hierarchical view of Church authority. It insists that God requires due order in all things, that the deposed clergy must be reinstated, and that the legitimate superiors must be obeyed.

The letter used the terms “bishop” and “presbyter” interchangeably to describe the higher ranks of clergy, but refers to some of them as “rulers” of the Church. It is they who lead its worship and “offer the gifts” of the Eucharist, just as the duly appointed priests of the Old Testament performed the various sacrifices and liturgies in their time.

Many congregations of the early Church read this letter in their worship, and several ancient manuscripts include it in the canonical books of the New Testament, along with a second letter, which is actually an early homily of unknown authorship. The text of First Clement was lost to the western Church in the Middle Ages, and was not rediscovered until 1628.

Clement writes: “The apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus the Christ was sent from God. Thus Christ is from God and the apostles from Christ. In both instances, the orderly procedure depends on God’s will. So thereafter, when the apostles had been given their instructions, and all their doubts had been set at rest by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, they went forth in the confidence of the Holy Spirit to preach the good news of the coming of God’s kingdom. They preached in country and city, and appointed their first converts, after testing them by the Spirit, to be the bishops and deacons of future believers.”

Thanksgiving Day *November*

A Reading from the Letter of James (1:17-18,21-27)

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 65:9-14

You crown the year with your goodness, O Lord.

- 9 You visit the earth and water it abundantly;
you make it very plenteous; *
the river of God is full of water.
- 10 You prepare the grain, *
for so you provide for the earth.

You crown the year with your goodness, O Lord.

- 11 You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; *
with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.
- 12 You crown the year with your goodness, *
and your paths overflow with plenty.

You crown the year with your goodness, O Lord.

- 13 May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, *
and the hills be clothed with joy.
- 14 May the meadows cover themselves with flocks,
and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; *
let them shout for joy and sing.

You crown the year with your goodness, O Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (6:25-33)*

Jesus said, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Agricultural festivals are of great antiquity, and common to many religions. Among the Jews, the three pilgrimage feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, each had agricultural significance. Medieval Christianity also developed a number of such observances, none of which, however, were incorporated into the Prayer Book.

Our own Thanksgiving Day finds its roots in observances begun by colonists in Massachusetts and Virginia, a tradition later taken up and extended to the whole of the new American nation by action of the Continental Congress.

Ember Day I

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (3:5-11)

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 99

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

- 1 The LORD is King;
let the people tremble; *
he is enthroned upon the cherubim;
let the earth shake.
- 2 The LORD is great in Zion; *
he is high above all peoples.

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

- 3 Let them confess his Name, which is great and awesome; *
he is the Holy One.
- 4 "O mighty King, lover of justice,
you have established equity; *
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob."

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

- 5 Proclaim the greatness of the LORD our God
and fall down before his footstool; *
he is the Holy One.
- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,
and Samuel among those who call upon his Name, *
they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

- 7 He spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; *
they kept his testimonies and the decree that he gave them.
- 8 “O LORD our God, you answered them indeed; *
you were a God who forgave them,
yet punished them for their evil deeds.”

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

- 9 Proclaim the greatness of the LORD our God
and worship him upon his holy hill; *
for the LORD our God is the Holy One.

Proclaim the greatness of the Lord.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (4:31-38)*

Meanwhile the disciples were urging Jesus, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest?’ But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Ember Day II

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (4:11-16)

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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 63:1-8

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

- 1 O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; *
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.
- 2 Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place, *
that I might behold your power and your glory.

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

- 3 For your loving-kindness is better than life itself; *
my lips shall give you praise.
- 4 So will I bless you as long as I live *
and lift up my hands in your Name.

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

- 5 My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, *
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,
6 When I remember you upon my bed, *
and meditate on you in the night watches.

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

- 7 For you have been my helper, *
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.
8 My soul clings to you; *
your right hand holds me fast.

Your loving-kindness, O Lord, is better than life itself.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (9:35-38)*

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

The Gospel of the Lord

Ember Day III

A Reading from the first Letter of Peter (4:7-11)

The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 15

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

- 1 LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle? *
who may abide upon your holy hill?
- 2 Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, *
who speaks the truth from his heart.

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

- 3 There is no guile upon his tongue;
he does no evil to his friend; *
he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor.
- 4 In his sight the wicked is rejected, *
but he honors those who fear the LORD.

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

- 5 He has sworn to do no wrong *
and does not take back his word.
- 6 He does not give his money in hope of gain, *
nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.
- 7 Whoever does these things *
shall never be overthrown.

Who may dwell in your tabernacle, O Lord?

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (16:24-27)*

Then Jesus told his disciples, “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 will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Rogation Day I

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (8:18-25)

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 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.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 147:1-10,12-13

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

- 1 Hallelujah!
How good it is to sing praises to our God! *
how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!
- 2 The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem; *
he gathers the exiles of Israel.

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

- 3 He heals the brokenhearted *
and binds up their wounds.
- 4 He counts the number of the stars *
and calls them all by their names.

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

- 5 Great is our LORD and mighty in power; *
there is no limit to his wisdom.

6 The LORD lifts up the lowly, *
but casts the wicked to the ground.

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; *
make music to our God upon the harp.

8 He covers the heavens with clouds *
and prepares rain for the earth;

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

9 He makes grass to grow upon the mountains *
and green plants to serve mankind.

10 He provides food for flocks and herds *
and for the young ravens when they cry.

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

12 The LORD has pleasure in those who fear him, *
in those who await his gracious favor.

13 Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem; *
praise your God, O Zion;

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (4:26-32)*

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come." He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

The Gospel of the Lord

Rogation Day II

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (3:10-14)

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 107:1-9

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

- 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, *
and his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Let all those whom the LORD has redeemed proclaim *
that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

- 3 He gathered them out of the lands; *
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.
- 4 Some wandered in desert wastes; *
they found no way to a city where they might dwell.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

- 5 They were hungry and thirsty; *
their spirits languished within them.
- 6 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, *
and he delivered them from their distress.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

- 7 He put their feet on a straight path *
to go to a city where they might dwell.
- 8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his mercy *
and the wonders he does for his children.
- 9 For he satisfies the thirsty *
and fills the hungry with good things.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (6:19-24)*

Jesus said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Rogation Day III

A Reading from the first Letter of Paul to Timothy (6:7-10,17-19)

For we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 104:25-33,37

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 25 O LORD, how manifold are your works! *
in wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
- 26 Yonder is the great and wide sea
with its living things too many to number, *
creatures both small and great.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 27 There move the ships,
and there is that Leviathan, *
which you have made for the sport of it.
- 28 All of them look to you *
to give them their food in due season.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 29 You give it to them; they gather it; *
you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.
- 30 You hide your face, and they are terrified; *
you take away their breath,
and they die and return to their dust.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 31 You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; *
and so you renew the face of the earth.
- 32 May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; *
may the LORD rejoice in all his works.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

- 33 He looks at the earth and it trembles; *
he touches the mountains and they smoke.
- 37 Bless the LORD, O my soul. *
Hallelujah!

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

✠ *The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (12:13-21)*

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.”

The Gospel of the Lord