



# Christ our Light

Towards Easter 2020

## SEQUENCE

- ▶ Lent 2020
- ▶ Reading 1
- ▶ Reading 2
- ▶ Reading 3
- ▶ Themes across the readings
- ▶ Pointers for prayer
- ▶ Prayer

## THE PLAN OF THE READINGS

1	Gen 2:7-9; 3:1-7	Adam and Eve	Rom 5:12-19	Adam and Jesus	Mt 4:1-11	The Tempting of the Son of God
2	Gen 12:1-4	Abraham	2 Tim 1:8-10	God's grace	Mt 17:1-9	Transfiguration
3	Ex 17:3-7	Moses	Rom 5:1-2, 5-8	God's love	Jn 4:5-42	The Samaritan
4	1 Sam 16:1, 6-7, 10-13	David	Eph 5:8-14	Light of Christ	Jn 9:1-41	Man born blind
5	Ezek 37:12-14	The Exile	Rom 8:8-11	Jesus will give life	Jn 11:1-45	Lazarus

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# ADAM AND EVE

Gen. 2:7 Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. 8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Gen. 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'"

4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; 5 for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

# IN GENERAL

- ▶ Mythic writing in the deep sense
- ▶ Close observation of human experience
- ▶ Varied comments on how things are the way they are
  - ▶ Attraction of men and women
  - ▶ Perspiration
  - ▶ Labour
- ▶ Some selected “explanations” for things
  - ▶ Why we wear clothes
  - ▶ Why snakes have no legs



## IN PARTICULAR

- ▶ Original grace
- ▶ Loss of innocence
- ▶ Discovery of shame
- ▶ Freedom of choice
- ▶ Attraction to what is forbidden
- ▶ Power of words
- ▶ Capacity for lying
- ▶ Capacity for blaming the other
- ▶ Responsibility for transgression / fracture / sin
- ▶ Sin "there" before us and we are not responsible
- ▶ The journey we all make towards mortality

### MISERERE MEI (PSALM 51)

- ▶ One of the penitential Psalms
- ▶ Psalms 6, 32 (31), 38 (37), 51 (50), 102 (101), 130 (129), and 143 (142)
- ▶ Possibly Psalms 50 and 51 belong together, as a penitential liturgy
- ▶ Psalm 50: covenant "enquiry"
- ▶ Psalm 51: admission of sin and prayer for pardon

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

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### MISERERE MEI (PSALM 51)

Have **mercy** on me, God, in your **kindness**.

In your **compassion** blot out my offense.

O wash me more and more from my guilt  
and cleanse me from my sin.

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.*

My offenses truly I know them;

my sin is always before me

Against you, you alone, have I sinned;

what is evil in your sight I have done.

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.*

A pure heart create for me, O God,  
put a **steadfast** spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence,  
nor deprive me of your **holy spirit**.

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.*

Give me again the **joy** of your help;

with a **spirit of fervour** sustain me,

O Lord, open my lips

and my mouth shall declare your **praise**.

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.*

# ADAM AND CHRIST

Rom 5:12 So then, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all people because all sinned- 13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world, but there is no accounting for sin when there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam (who is a type of the coming one) transgressed. 15 But the gracious gift is not like the transgression. For if the many died through the transgression of the one man, how much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ multiply to the many! 16 And the gift is not like the one who sinned. For judgment, resulting from the one transgression,

led to condemnation, but the gracious gift from the many failures led to justification. 17 For if, by the transgression of the one man, death reigned through the one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ!

Rom 5:18 Consequently, just as condemnation for all people came through one transgression, so too through the one righteous act came righteousness leading to life for all people. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one man many will be made righteous.

Verses	Letter	Rhetoric	Topic
1:1-7	Superscript		Sender, addressee, greetings
1:8-15	Thanksgiving	Introduction	Reasons for coming to Rome
1:16-17	Body	Thesis	Faith, salvation, righteousness, Jew, Gentile, living
1:18-4:23		Proof 1	Jews and Gentiles in need of Christ and faith
5-8		Proof 2	Salvation, baptism, life in Christ, hope
9-11		Proof 3	God's election of Jews and inclusion of Gentiles
12:1-15:6		Proof 4	Life together in the body of Christ, weak and strong
15:7-33		Conclusion	Reasons for coming to Rome
16	Conclusion		Greetings to 26 people in Rome, prayer

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## ROMANS 5:12-21

- ▶ Paul assumes the historicity of Adam
- ▶ In apocalyptic, the beginning and the end resemble each other
- ▶ Justification means “right relationship”
- ▶ Sin is personified as a force
- ▶ Jesus’ death was a communion sacrifice

## ROMANS 5:12-21

- ▶ Rom 5:12 So then, just as **sin** entered the world through **one man** and death through **sin**, and so **death** spread to **all** people because **all sinned** –
- ▶ NB: At v. 12, Paul interrupts his own train of thought, to resume at v. 18
- ▶ 13 for before the law was given, **sin** was in the world, but there is no accounting for **sin** when there is no law. 14 Yet **death** reigned from **Adam until Moses** even over those who did not **sin** in the same way that **Adam** (who is a **type** of the coming one) **transgressed**.



## ROMANS 5:12-21

- ▶ eph' ho pantes hemarton
- ▶ (in quo omnes peccaverunt)
- ▶ "In whom all sinned", i.e. somehow all humanity sinned in Adam
- ▶ "Inasmuch as all sinned", i.e. all humanity followed Adam's example

## ROMANS 5:12-21

Rom 5:15 But the **gracious gift** is not like the **transgression**. For if the many died through the **transgression** of the one man, how **much more** did the **grace** of God and the gift by the **grace** of the one man Jesus Christ multiply to the many!

16 And the **gift** is not like the one who **sinned**. For judgment, resulting from the **one transgression**, led to **condemnation**, but the **gracious gift** from the many failures led to **justification**.

17 For if, by the **transgression** of the one man, **death** reigned through the one, how much more will those who receive the **abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness** reign in **life** through the one, Jesus Christ!

NB: At v. 18, Paul resumes his own train of thought, from v. 12

## ROMANS 5:12-21

- ▶ In Apocalyptic, the beginning and the end resemble each other
- ▶ The "one man" section is an argument from "congruence"
- ▶ The "not like" statements are argument from "incongruence", bolstered by "much more surely" (a fortiori)
- ▶ Adam and Christ resemble each other
- ▶ The trespass and the (free) gift do not resemble each other
- ▶ Finally, v.18 picks up on the interrupted v.12 (see next slide)

# COMPARE

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since **death** came through **a man**, the **resurrection of the dead** also came through **a man**. For just as in **Adam** all **die**, so also in **Christ** all will be made **alive**.

But each in his own order: Christ, the first-fruits; then when Christ comes, those who belong to him.

(1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

So also it is written, "**The first man, Adam, became a living person**"; **the last Adam became a life-giving spirit**. However, the spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and then the spiritual.

The **first man** is from the **earth**, made of **dust**; the **second man** is from **heaven**. Like the one made of dust, so too are those made of dust, and like the one from heaven, so too those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the **image** of the **man of dust**, let us also **bear the image of the man of heaven**.

(1 Corinthians 15:45-49)

## ROMANS 5:12-21

Rom 5:12 So then, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all people because all sinned...

Rom 5:18 Consequently, just as condemnation for all people came through one transgression, so too through the one righteous act came righteousness leading to life for all people. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one man many will be made righteous.

## THE TEMPTING OF THE SON OF MAN

Matt 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. 3 The tempter came and said to him, **"If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."** 4 But he answered, "It is written, **'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'**"

Matt 4:5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 saying to him, **"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down;** for it is written, **'He will command his angels concerning you,'** and **'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'**"

7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, **'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'**"

Matt 4:8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; 9 and he said to him, **"All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."** 10 Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, **'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'**"

11 Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

## THE TEMPTING OF THE SON OF GOD

- ▶ NT Expansion of Mark by Q
- ▶ OT: Israel tested in the wilderness
- ▶ OT: Moses
- ▶ OT: Elijah
- ▶ NT: the place of this story in Matthew's Gospel

## EXPANSION OF MARK BY Q

- ▶ Mark 1:12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.
- ▶ Luke: Bread, Mountain, Jerusalem
- ▶ Matthew: Bread, Jerusalem, Mountain



## ISRAEL TESTED IN THE WILDERNESS

- ▶ Hunger: Ex 16:2-8 (manna)
- ▶ Testing God: Ex 17:1-3 (rock)
- ▶ Idolatry: Exodus 32 (golden calf)
- ▶ Q has created a haggadic account, equating Israel's wilderness temptations with those of Jesus.

## MOSES

- ▶ Matthew continues his Moses typology established in the Infancy Narrative.
- ▶ Matthew add “and forty nights”
- ▶ Moses view of the Promised Land, e.g. in Deuteronomy 34

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, **and the LORD showed him the whole land:** Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, and the Plain—that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. The LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.” (Deut 34:1-4)

## ELIJAH

Ahab told Jezebel all that **Elijah** had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to **Elijah**, saying, "So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors."

Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. **Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him**, "Get up and eat." He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. **The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said**, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you."

He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food **forty days and forty nights** to Horeb the mount of God. (1 Kgs 19:1-8)

## PLACE OF THIS STORY IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

- ▶ Jesus' struggle with Herod, the high priests and the scribes is really a conflict of kingdoms.
- ▶ Test/tempt is later used only of the Jewish leaders: 16:1, 19:3; 22:18, 35.
- ▶ Satan continues: 12:28-29, 16:23 (!), 13:18, 39 and 25:41.
- ▶ Cf. Peter: But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." (Matt 16:23)

## PLACE OF THIS STORY IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Matt 27:38 Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, **"You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."** 41 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were

mocking him, saying, 42 **"He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'"** 44 The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

# THEMES ACROSS THE READINGS

- ▶ Genesis as a “story of origins” is really the life of every human being, as we each move from innocence to knowledge, transgression and mortality.
- ▶ Romans also reflects on origins but from the perspective of salvation in Christ. Paul names our need for such great gifts: it is the human condition (going back symbolically to Adam in Romans 5) and it is the existential reality of each one (as we see in Romans 7).
- ▶ Finally, in the account of the temptations, Jesus himself illustrates the human condition of inclination to distorted options and the imposed freedom of having no choice but to choose.

# POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. In today's gospel Jesus is enticed to gratify his own needs, or to perform some spectacular act in public. He rejects the temptation because he chooses commitment to his mission and dependence on his Father over any immediate gratification. We can all be tempted to go for some immediate satisfaction...but is that where true happiness lies? Have you found that sometimes it can be more life-giving to say "no" to your immediate desires for the sake of some long-term goal?

What are the goals, aims, values, which inspire you in this way?

2. One way of looking at this gospel is to say that Jesus went into the desert to face his demons. We all have demons we need to face—compulsions, fears, prejudices, anger, and urges that lurk within. It is in facing our demons that we find a way to live a fuller life. Can you recall a time when you grew through facing a "demon" in this way?

### PRAYER

Lord our God, in every age you call a people to hear your word and to do your will.

Renew us in these Lenten days: washed clean of sin, sealed with the Spirit and sustained by your living bread, may we remain true to our calling and, with the elect, serve you alone.

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.



