

Those who believe base their lives on the certitude that god works for their happiness. They accept love as the law of their life, and they believe that human love leads them to the love of God.

9. *Who will separate us from the love of Christ?*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (8: 31-35, 37-39)

With God on our side who can be against us? Since god did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that god has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at God’s right hand he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing, therefore, can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of god made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord

Saint Paul urges all Christians to offer themselves to God, that his love may transform and guide them, and that they may open their hearts to others. Marriage gives new incentives to this invitation and helps couples respond through the grace of the sacrament.

10 *The new life of Christians*

(The shorter form of this reading, 1-2, 9-13, ends at the asterisks)

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (12: 1-2, 9-18a)

Think of god's mercy, my brothers, and worship him. I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God. Do not model yourselves on the behavior of the world around you, but let your behavior change, modeled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that god wants, what is the perfect thing to do.

Do not let your love be a pretence, but sincerely prefer good to evil. Love each other as much as brothers should, and have a profound respect for each other.

Word for the Lord with untiring effort and with great earnestness of spirit. If you have hope, this will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying. If any of the saints are in need you must share with them; and you should make hospitality your special care.

Bless those who persecute you: never curse them, bless them. Rejoice with those who rejoice and be sad with those in sorrow.

Treat everyone with equal kindness; never be condescending but make real friends with the poor. Do not allow yourself to become self-satisfied. Never repay evil with evil but let everyone see that you are interested only in the highest ideals. Do all you can to live at peace with everyone.

The Word of the Lord

Christian faith teaches us to respect our body: the human body belongs to the Lord, who makes it holy and raises it up. As we treat

our bodies with respect, the joy of love leads to the joy of Christ.

11. Your body is a temple of the Spirit

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians (6: 13c-15a, 17-20)

The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God, who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise us up too.

You know, surely that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ?

Anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.

The Word of the Lord

It is not the extraordinary things that make life worthwhile but the love that we share with those around us – a love that comes from God. Let us be eager to learn how to love with this kind of love “which will never fade away.”

12 *Love will never pass away*

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians (12: 31-13:8)

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is better than any of them.

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end.

The Word of the Lord

Jesus has revealed his love to us by submitting to his Father and by loving us "as his own body". Saint Paul invites us to love as Jesus has loved us.

13 *Live in love, like Christ*

(The shorter version begins at the asterisks)

Follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up in our place.

Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything.

Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form of words, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless.

In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies: for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because it is his body – and we are its living parts.

For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body.

This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church.

To sum up; you, too; each one of you, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife respect her husband.

The Word of the Lord

Saint Paul invites us to love each other with kindness, patience and forgiveness. Such is the way of holiness proposed to a Christian husband and wife, for their family life and for their life in the world around them.

14 *Love is the bond of perfection*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians (3:12-17)

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same.

Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord

Love makes some moral demands. Husband and wife together

discover how the Lord respects us, whatever may be our weakness. They too shall respect and love each other.

15 *The unity and peace of the Christian home*

A reading from the first letter of Peter (3: 1-9)

Wives should be obedient to their husbands. Then, if there are some husbands who have not yet obeyed the word, they may find themselves won over, without a word spoken, by the way their wives behave, when they see how faithful and conscientious they are.

Do not dress up for show: doing up your hair, wearing gold bracelets and fine clothes; all this should be inside, in a person's heart, imperishable: the ornament of a sweet and gentle disposition – that is what is precious in the sight of God.

That was how the holy women of the past dressed themselves attractively – they hoped in God and were tender and obedient to their husbands; like Sarah, who was obedient to Abraham, and called him her lord. You are now her children, as long as you live good lives and do not give way to fear or worry.

In the same way, husbands must always treat their wives with consideration in their life together, respecting a woman as one who, though she may be the weaker partner, is equally an heir to the life of grace. This will stop anything from coming in the way of your prayers.

Finally: you should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic; love the brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing. Never pay back one wrong with another, or an angry word with another one; instead, pay back

with a blessing. That is what you are called to do, so that you inherit a blessing yourself.

The Word of the Lord

True love finds expression in deeds. It leads to peace of heart.

16 *A true love*

A Reading from the first letter of John (3: 18-24)

My children

Our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active; only by this can we be certain that we are children of the truth and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence, whatever accusations it may raise against us, because God is greater than our conscience and he knows everything.

My dear people

If we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants.

His commandments are these:

That we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to. Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the spirit that he has given us.

The Word of the Lord

Love comes from god. True love is generous; it does not wait for the other to take the first step. It models itself on the Lord who has loved us first without waiting for us to love him.

17 *God is love*

A reading from the first letter of John (4: 7-12)

My dear people, let us love one another since love comes from God and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love.

God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him; this is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.

My dear people, since God has loved us so much, we too should love one another. No one has ever seen God; but as long as we love one another god will live in us and his love will be complete in us.

The Word of the Lord

The source of all human love is the love of the Lord for his Church: "the wedding feast of the Lamb" which is described in this glorious

and mysterious passage of scripture.

18 *The wedding feast*

A reading from the book of Revelation (19: 1, 5-9a)

I, John, seemed to hear the great sound of a huge crowd in heaven, singing, "Alleluia! Victory and glory and power to our God!"

Then a voice came from the throne; it said, "Praise our God, you servants of his and all who, great or small, revere him."

I seemed to hear the voice of a huge crowd, like the sound of the ocean or the great roar of thunder, answering, "Alleluia! The reign of the Lord our God Almighty has begun; let us be glad and joyful and give praise to God, because this is the time for the marriage of the Lamb. His bride is ready, and she has been able to dress herself in dazzling white linen, because her linen is made of the good deeds of the saints."

The angel said, "Write this: Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb."

The Word of the Lord