

THURSDAY AGAPE

EVENING PRAYER (VESPERS)
THURSDAY, WEEK 3
EASTERTIDE

coming of Christ, however, in the flesh, and especially in his resurrection in the flesh, Christianity rejects the idea that the body is trash. On the contrary, it is now literally incorporated into Christ's work of redemption. The message of Easter is not the resurrection of the soul, but of the body and the soul. Therefore, St. Paul tells the Corinthians, the body now belongs to God. It has been "bought and paid for" by the blood of Christ. We no longer own our own bodies, but are part of the Body of Christ. Our bodies are destined to share in the glory of the Trinity, and so sinning in the body or against the body contradicts that destiny and defiles the dignity of our flesh redeemed by Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

- Application to our own bodies. *The body is God's first gift to us and was always intended by Him to be in harmony with our spirits. The conflict and division we experience as a result of sin draws the body into this battle. It's only as sin begins in our spirits that bodily sin appears. The sexual faculty is clearly made for the dual purpose of uniting man and woman and generating new life. But sin easily distorts and undermines that faculty. Today, we see that even sexual identity is brought into the struggle (although it has probably always been a problem for some). Baptism and grace are about cleansing us from sin and restoring harmony between spirit and body. By baptism Christ claims us whole and entire for himself so as to share with us his infinite love and peace and restore integrity and harmony within us. His Spirit makes a temple of our body and dwells in it until He raises us from death. Certainly, we still struggle with sexual temptations, and often emotional and psychological problems feed into sexual weakness. But so long as we work with the Spirit and ask for the grace of sexual purity and chastity, the struggle to use our bodies for the glory of God will be won. It requires self-discipline and self-denial and a lively faith in the presence and power of Christ and his Spirit within us. He will not leave us if we try.*
- Application to the 'one body' of the married. *In marriage, a spouse surrenders his/her own body to the other. As Jesus says, "they are no longer two, but one, body." When both are baptised, their union is a Sacrament of Christ's one flesh with the Church. They are a living presence of the union in one Body between the Lord and all who believe in Him. This Sacrament means that the couple belong no longer just to each other but to Christ and the Church; or, better, to Christ in the Church. The married carry three levels of grace: that of their own baptism, that of their mutual married and sacramental love; and that of the union between Christ and the Church. This is why sexual infidelity of any kind by the married is so sad and serious. It's also why any use of sex outside marriage sins against marriage.*

Introduction (All stand)

Priest: O God, come to our aid.

People: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Priest: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

People: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

Hymn

*Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come
from thy bright heav'nly throne.
Come, take possession of our souls
and make them all thine own.*

*O guide our minds with thy blest light,
with love our hearts in-flame;
and with thy strength, which ne'er decays
confirm our mortal frame.*

*Thou who art called the Paraclete,
blest gift of God above,
the living spring, the living fire,
sweet unction and true love.*

*Far from us drive our deadly foe,
true peace unto us bring;
and through all perils lead us safe
beneath thy sacred wing.*

*Thou who art sev'nfold in thy grace,
finger of God's right hand;
his promise, teaching little ones
to speak and understand.*

*Through thee may we the Father know,
through thee th'eternal Son,
and thee the Spirit of them both,
thrice-blessèd Three in One.*

Psalms and Canticle (All sit)

Psalm 131 (132):1-10
God's promise to the house of David

“The Lord God will give him the throne
of David his father” (Lk 1:32).

Priest: The Lord God gave him the throne of David, his father. Alleluia.

Men: O Lord, remember David
and all the many hardships he endured,
the oath he swore to the Lord,
his vow to the Strong One of Jacob.

Women: ‘I will not enter the house where I live
nor go to the bed where I rest.
I will give no sleep to my eyes,
to my eyelids I will give no slumber
till I find a place for the Lord,
a dwelling for the Strong One of Jacob.’

At Ephrata we heard of the ark;
we found it in the plains of Yearim.
‘Let us go to the place of his dwelling;
let us go to kneel at his footstool.’

Go up, Lord, to the place of your rest,
you and the ark of your strength.
Your priests shall be clothed with holiness;
your faithful shall ring out their joy.
For the sake of David your servant
do not reject your anointed.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

All: The Lord God gave him the throne of David, his father. Alleluia.

All: Lord, protect those you have redeemed.

Priest: May your Spirit guide the rulers of all nations; let them see your
vision of peace and make it a reality.

All: Lord, protect those you have redeemed.

Priest: You are living now in the glory of the Father; call the faithful
departed to share in your splendour.

All: Lord, protect those you have redeemed.

Our Father

Priest: Lord God, let your Spirit come upon us in power and fill us with
his gifts, to render our minds pleasing to you and make us docile to your
will. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with
you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. *All: Amen.*

Priest: The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to
everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading for Silent Meditation

“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.”

1. Reflection on why St. Paul writes these words. *The Church founded by Paul
in Corinth was strongly influenced by the culture of the time. Sexual immorality of
all kinds was rampant in the Greek world and wider Mediterranean. While this was
partly due to human weakness and sin, it was also due to a way of thinking which
said that only the soul counts. The body is just dust and ashes, so it doesn't matter
what you do with it. So, strangely, in the name of saying they were spiritual people
who put the soul first, they allowed themselves debauchery of all sorts. With the*

He casts the mighty *from* their thrones
and *raises* the lowly.

He fills the starving *with* good things,
sends the rich *a*-way empty.

He protects Isra-*el*, his servant,
Remembe-*ring* his mercy,
the mercy promised *to* our fathers,
to Abraham and his *sons* for ever.

Glory be to the Father and *to* the Son and to the *Ho*-ly Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and e-*ver* shall be, world without *end*.
Amen.

All: When the Spirit of truth comes he will teach you the whole truth; he will reveal to you things that are to come. Alleluia.

Prayers and intercessions

Priest: Let us pray to Christ, who is blessed for ever. Let us ask him to send the Holy Spirit to those he has redeemed.

All: Lord, protect those you have redeemed.

Priest: Send the Spirit of unity into your Church; take away from us anger and dissension.

All: Lord, protect those you have redeemed.

Priest: You freed men who were possessed by devils; heal the sickness of our world.

All: Lord, protect those you have redeemed.

Priest: By praying through the Holy Spirit, you found the inspiration for your ministry; may priests discover through prayer how to follow the Holy Spirit and fulfil their life of service.

Psalm 131 (132): 11-18

Priest: Jesus Christ is the only Ruler over all, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Alleluia.

Men: The Lord swore an oath to David;
he will not go back on his word:
‘A son, the fruit of your body,
will I set upon your throne.

Women: ‘If they keep my covenant in truth
and my laws that I have taught them,
their sons also shall rule
on your throne from age to age.’

For the Lord has chosen Sion;
he has desired it for his dwelling;
‘This is my resting-place for ever;
here have I chosen to live.

‘I will greatly bless her produce,
I will fill her poor with bread.
I will clothe her priests with salvation
and her faithful shall ring out their joy.

‘There David’s stock will flower;
I will prepare a lamp for my anointed.
I will cover his enemies with shame
but on him my crown shall shine.’

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

All: Jesus Christ is the only Ruler over all, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Alleluia.

Canticle

Apocalypse 11

The Judgement

Priest: Lord, who is your like, majestic in strength and holiness? Alleluia.

Women: We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
who are and who were,
that you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.

Men: The nations raged,
but your wrath came,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear your name,
both small and great.

Now the salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Christ have come,
for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down,
who accuses them day and night before our God.

And they have conquered him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
for they loved not their lives even unto death.
Rejoice, then, O heaven,
and you that dwell therein.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

All: Lord, who is your like, majestic in strength and holiness? Alleluia.

Short Reading

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

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.

Short Responsory

Priest: The Holy Spirit is the Advocate, alleluia, alleluia.

All: The Holy Spirit is the Advocate, alleluia, alleluia.

Priest: He will teach you everything.

All: The Holy Spirit is the Advocate, alleluia, alleluia.

Priest: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All: The Holy Spirit is the Advocate, alleluia, alleluia.

Canticle *(All stand)*

Magnificat

My soul rejoices in the Lord

Priest: When the Spirit of truth comes he will teach you the whole truth; he will reveal to you things that are to come. Alleluia.

Women: My soul glori-fies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

Men: The Almighty works mar-vels for me.
Ho-ly his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.