



## The Week of Ad Te Levavi

“Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul”

## *Ad Te Levavi: The First Sunday in Advent*

### Psalm 25

#### Reading: St. Matthew 21.1-9

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!"

### Meditation

From Bethphage Jesus sends two disciples to get two beasts for Him to ride. ***Bethphage*** means "mouth house," for here Jesus fulfills the word of the Prophet, saying, ***Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your King is coming to you***, etc. So also, from the mouth house of God the word sounds forth that Jesus is indeed the King, in spite of His meekness. In meekness He rides an ass and a colt; and in meekness He preaches to His people and feeds them; even as His birth was in meekness. He rides first the ass, and then the colt, moving from the old to the new, even as He inaugurates the New Testament. But consider this new colt: untamed, yet tame; untied, yet submissive. So consider also the new Jerusalem, the church: she does not chafe beneath Him; she does not run from Him but willingly bears Him aloft. And the disciples' garments are cast upon the colt, even as it is through the apostolic preaching that the church receives her Master, while she awaits His advent with an eager heart. For she celebrates His advent whenever He comes, through this preaching, and especially in the Holy Sacrament, when she, the new Jerusalem, cries out saying, ***Hosanna!*** which, according to the psalmist, was for royal inauguration, ***Save now!*** or rather, ***God save the King!*** For He was to be crowned at His crucifixion.

## *Monday of Ad Te Levavi*

### Psalm 25

#### Reading: St. Matthew 11.25-30

At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

#### Meditation

The Lord of heaven and earth is Himself wise and prudent; indeed, He alone is wise and prudent; thus anyone else who thinks himself thus deceives himself, and the truth is not in him; and to be truly wise and prudent is not something achieved but granted, as Christ says here: ***You have revealed them to babes.*** But see to whom this is granted: babes! Infants, those who have no claim on achievement whatsoever. These are the best candidates for Baptism then, for surely they will not claim credit for the wisdom and prudence they shall receive therein. These, and whoever becomes like them in the humility of a contrite heart. And to the rest, who ***labor and are heavy laden***, that is, who are burdened with fruitless efforts to gain wisdom and prudence, Christ offers this invitation: ***Come to Me.*** That is, approach the One who gives freely. For He who is the fulfillment of the Sabbath commandment now offers ***rest***, in the knowledge not only that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, but also that He redeemed it, that we may rest in Him, that is, in Christ who says, ***I will give you rest.*** For the burden of redemption has already been accomplished by Him who is our holy Ox, and thus His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

## *Tuesday of Ad Te Levavi*

### Psalm 25

#### Reading: Acts 3.22-26

“For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

#### Meditation

Now as Peter preaches to the men of Israel, he makes it clear that Jesus is the very One who came in fulfillment of the Scriptures: *Moses truly said*. Men of Israel! Do you not claim Moses and his words? What, then, does Moses say? *The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren*. Who is this Prophet? Was not Christ anointed this Prophet at His Baptism, when the voice from the cloud commanded, saying, *Hear Him*? The voice of the Father has thus designated our Jesus as this Prophet, the Incarnate Word, the One greater than Moses. For Moses ascended the mountain to receive the commandments from God, but Christ sat on the mountain to give His Holy Gospel to His disciples; Moses returned from the mountain with shining face reflecting the light of Him who was to come; but Christ *is* the Light, who in His transfiguration shone with unborrowed light. So Christ is also greater than Abraham, and is his promised Seed, in whom *all the families of the earth shall be blessed*. For Abraham received the Promised Land, but Christ purchased and redeemed all the world; Abraham’s name means “Father of a multitude,” but Christ is not only named, but truly is to the eternal Father *My beloved Son*, and therefore is one with Him and the Spirit.

## *Wednesday of Ad Te Levavi*

### Psalm 25

#### Reading: Colossians 1.15-20 (1.15-29)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

#### Meditation

In calling our Lord Jesus Christ *firstborn over all creation*, the Apostle does not mean to say that He is Himself a creature, but that He is the Creator, ever blessed, of all creatures. This is why it is added that *by Him all things were created*. To say He is *firstborn* is not to say that there was ever a time when He was not, but to say, rather, that He is eternally and perpetually the *firstborn* and only-begotten from the bosom of the Father, above all angels. Therefore, He is also firstborn from the grave, the head of the body springing forth from the earth's womb because He is the eternally begotten Son. And as every son bears the image of his father, so does He, in a more excellent way, for *He is the image of the invisible God*. See, Adam was made *in the image of God*, but Christ *is* the image of God. Therefore, Adam was made *in* Christ. When the invisible God created Adam, He declared by this creation how He himself would one day appear in *the fullness of time*. No one has seen the Father at any time, but the image of the Father we see in Jesus, for He, *the Firstborn over all creation*, is His image and icon. Behold the Lord Jesus, and you behold the One in whom all fullness dwells, that is, *all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*.

## *Thursday of Ad Te Levavi*

### Psalm 25

#### Reading: Hebrews 1.1-4

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

#### Meditation

In the beginning, God spoke, creating the world; and the Word of God which He spoke was eternal, was God from God; and so it was that *at various times and in various ways* God spoke also *by the prophets*; which is to say, when they spoke, He continued to speak; yea, their word was the Word, Christ, who was to come. So has the Word sounded forth from God from the beginning until finally *these last days*. Now what? Now is the time of fulfillment, when the eternal Word which sounded forth from God's mouth, by which God *made the worlds*, has become flesh. For in the beginning God said, *Let Us make man in Our image*, that man might reflect the image of God; but now, in the end, God's image becomes manifest *in Himself*. For who is Christ? *The brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person*. So then, in the beginning God's Word created man in the flesh; but now, in the end, God's Word of creation becomes one with His creation, in order to restore it to glory. And this restoration is indicated by the Apostle, who says that Christ *purged our sins, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*. See what glory! Man sits on the throne of God. The Word became flesh, in order that flesh might be wedded to the eternal God.

## *Friday of Ad Te Levavi*

### Psalm 25

#### Reading: Hebrews 2.1-4

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

#### Meditation

What are *the things we have heard*? Are they not the Gospel, which is the Word, which is Christ? To Him *we must give the more earnest heed*, then, for He is Himself *the word spoken through angels*. Which angels? Surely, the ministering angels who worship Him, who laud and magnify His glorious name, evermore praising Him and saying, *Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!* But the prophets are also angels, of another kind, for they are also messengers of God, who spoke His word to every generation. They have blessed the Lord, these angels that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. And their word *proved steadfast*, in that it has been demonstrated to be the truth, by virtue of the fact that the nations which opposed their word were thrown down and defeated, for *every transgression and disobedience received a just reward*. Indeed, the overthrow of all Israel's enemies, throughout their generations, is testimony to the truth of the word spoken through angels. But now we see Jesus, the One of whom they all spoke, the Incarnate Word; as has been *confirmed to us by those who heard Him*, that is, the holy Apostles. How much more need we to pay heed to His voice, for *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?*

## *Saturday of Ad Te Levavi*

### Psalm 25

#### Reading: Ephesians 3.1-12

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

#### Meditation

Christ *made known to me the mystery*, says the Apostle here. What mystery? *The mystery of Christ*. Now why is Christ called a mystery? Is He not the revelation of God? Did He not say to Philip, *He who has seen Me has seen the Father*? What mystery, then? Surely, that which is known only by faith, and not by sight. For Philip did not *see* that the Father was in Christ; and indeed, if we behold His humility, from His birth to His passion and death, we *see* nothing that bespeaks His divinity. So it is a mystery, revealed to faith by the word of the Gospel, which the Apostle was sent to preach. For the Gospel alone reveals the mystery, that there is no other God than this man, through whom alone (in spite of His appearance) is salvation and life. But in other ages *it was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets*. For now is the day of salvation, for Christ has come in the flesh; and thus also now the mystery is made known by the preaching of Christ. And not only to the people of Israel, but also to the Gentiles, that they *should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ*. Partakers how? *Through the gospel*; for therein is the revelation of the mystery.