

Link to Liturgy



2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time Lamb of God

Link to Liturgy provides faithful resources which use the latest audiovisual means alongside traditional means to evangelize & catechize thus linking life to the Gospel & the Gospel to life. Sign up Free to Link to Liturgy.



Lessons and Discussions

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“Behold, the Lamb of God”

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“After me comes a man who ranks before me”

Page 15 – Frequent Forgiveness

“who takes away the sin of the World!”

Entrance Antiphon – Roman Missal

Should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

Omnis terra *Ps 66 (65): 4*

IV

ET all the earth * worship you and praise
you, O God; may it sing in praise of
your name, O Most High.

Source: <http://www.ccwatershed.org/>

Alternate options:

At the Name of Jesus
Hail to the Lord's Anointed
The Church's One Foundation
When the Saints Come Marching In

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Almighty ever-living God,
who governs all things,
both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people
and bestow your peace on our times.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

- [37] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., Basic Catholic Catechism Course, Lesson II, Original Sin
- [38] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., Basic Catholic Catechism Course, Lesson II, Original Sin
- [39] Romans 7:15
- [40] Romans 5:20-21
- [41] G. Redondo, Reason for Hope, Pamplona 1977
- [42] Mat. 18:11
- [43] Rev. 1:5
- [44] John 20:21-23
- [45] Fernandez, In conversation with God, 3, 7.2
- [46] St. Augustine, Commentary on St. John's Gospel, 29, 24
- [47] B. Baur, Frequent Confession, pg. 121
- [48] Fernandez, In conversation with God, 3, 7.1
- [49] Fernandez, In conversation with God, 3, 7.3

Gospel Reading – John 1:29-34 – Roman Missal

NOTE: *This Gospel is found in the Tridentine Lectionary on the Octave of Epiphany / Baptism of Our Lord (1/13)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
- Glory to you O Lord

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading

From a Letter to the Ephesians by Saint Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr

The harmony of unity

It is right for you to give glory in every way to Jesus Christ who has given glory to you; you must be made holy in all things by being united in perfect obedience, in submission to the bishop and the presbyters.

I am not giving you orders as if I were a person of importance. Even if I am a prisoner for the name of Christ, I am not yet made perfect in Jesus Christ. I am now beginning to be a disciple and I am speaking to you as my fellow disciple. It is you who should be strengthening me by your faith, your encouragement, your patience, your serenity. But since love will not allow me to be silent about you, I am taking the opportunity to urge you to be united in conformity with the mind of God. For Jesus Christ, our life, without whom we cannot live, is the mind of the Father, just as the bishops, appointed over the whole earth, are in conformity with the mind of Jesus Christ.

It is fitting, therefore, that you should be in agreement with the mind of the bishop as in fact you are. Your excellent presbyters, who are a credit to God, are as suited to the bishop as strings to a harp. So in your harmony of mind and heart the song you sing is Jesus Christ. Every one of you should form a choir, so that, in harmony of sound through harmony of hearts, and in unity taking the note from God, you may sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father. If you do this, he will listen to you and see from your good works that you are members of his Son. It is then an advantage to you to live in perfect unity, so that at all times you may share in God.

If in a short space of time I have become so close a friend of your bishop—in a friendship not based on nature but on spiritual grounds—how much more blessed do I judge you to be, for you are as united with him as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father, so that all things are in harmony through unity. Let no one make any mistake: unless a person is within the sanctuary, he is deprived of God's bread. For if the prayer of one or two has such power, how much more has the prayer of the bishop and the whole Church.

Responsory – Divine Office

See Ephesians 4:1, 3-4

I implore you in the Lord, lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you have been called.

– Be careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, and there is but one hope given to you by your calling.

– Be careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Lamb of God (Part I) – Lesson and Discussion

“Behold, the Lamb of God”

In today's Gospel Reading we hear for the first time the title 'Lamb of God.' Saint John the Baptist uses this title in reference to Jesus. Throughout our attendance of the Mass, we have heard this title 'Lamb of God' many, many times. "We have got used to the words 'Lamb of God', but nevertheless they are still wonderful, mysterious words; powerful words.”[1]

the sea, come quickly to the aid of thy people, fallen indeed but striving to stand again. To nature's astonishment thou wert the mother of thy holy Creator without ceasing to be a virgin, and heard from Gabriel that greeting: "Hail." Have pity on us sinners.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made know by the message of an angel may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

“The End” Notes

[1] John Paul II, Homily, 18 January 1981

[2] CCC 608

[3] The Order of the Mass, The Liturgy of the Eucharist

[4] John 6:51

[5] CCC 1362

[6] <http://www.catholic.com/tracts/the-institution-of-the-mass>

[7] CCC 1367

[8] CCC 1364

[9] 1 Cor. 6-8

[10] 1 Pet. 1:18-20

[11] "Orations and Sermons" [Jaeger: Vol 9, p. 287] ca. 383 A.D.

[12] Lumen Gentium 6

[13] Rev. 5:6

[14] Rev. 5:11-14

[15] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary, pg. 17

[16] The Order of the Mass, The Communion Rite

[17] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 307

[18] Roman Catholic Daily Missal; 1962; The Agnus Dei

[19] John 1:30

[20] Navarre Bible, Gospel of John pg. 55

[21] St. Gregory the Great, In Evangelia homiliae, VII

[22] Fr. Gabriel, Divine Intimacy vol. I pg. 154

[23] Matthew 3:17

[24] John 1:29-34

[25] Navarre Bible, Gospel of John pg. 56

[26] CCC 536

[27] John 12:49

[28] 2 Timothy 4:1

[29] Isaiah 11:6

[30] Fr. Gabriel, Divine Intimacy vol. I pg. 154-155

[31] Fernandez, In conversation with God, 3, 7.2

[32] 1 Peter 5:8

[33] Navarre Bible, Gospel of John pg. 55

[34] Fernandez, In conversation with God, 3, 7.1

[35] CCC 408

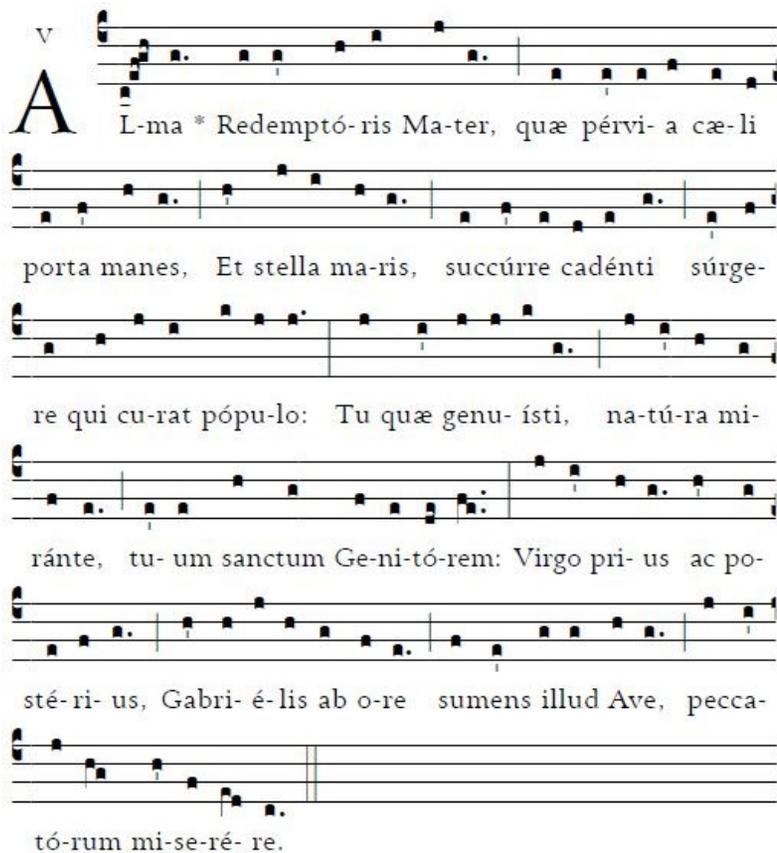
[36] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., Basic Catholic Catechism Course, Lesson II, Original Sin

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

I belong to you entirely.
All that I possess is yours.
I take you into everything that is mine.
Give me your heart Mary.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Marian Antiphon – Alma Redemptoris Mater



V
A L-ma * Redemptó-ris Ma-ter, quæ pérvī-a cæ-li
porta manes, Et stella ma-ris, succúrre cadénti súrge-
re qui cu-rat pópu-lo: Tu quæ genu-ísti, na-tú-ra mi-
rante, tu-um sanctum Ge-ni-tó-rem: Virgo pri-us ac po-
sté-ri-us, Gabrí-élis ab o-re sumens illud Ave, pecca-
tó-rum mi-se-ré-re.

Alma Redemptoris Mater (English Translation)

Loving mother of the Redeemer, open door to heaven and star of

Why are the words ‘Lamb of God’ powerful? When John the Baptist calls Jesus the ‘Lamb of God’ he “reveals that Jesus is at the same time the suffering Servant who silently allows himself to be led to the slaughter and who bears the sin of the multitudes, and also the Paschal Lamb, the symbol of Israel’s redemption at the first Passover. Christ’s whole life expresses his mission: ‘to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.’”^[2] The words ‘Lamb of God’ are powerful because this title gives us insight into the identity of Jesus. How would a person living 2,000 years ago understand this title? How do we understand the mystery and power of these words?

In this lesson we look to the Old Testament and three major Old Testament events that link Jesus to the title ‘Lamb of God.’

Abraham (Gen. 22:1-14)

The first person we look at is Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac. Abraham is known as our ‘Father in Faith.’ God establishes a covenant with Abraham and promises him many generations of ancestors. God fulfills His promise to Abraham in the birth of Isaac. However, God tests Abraham’s faith by asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac. On the way to the sacrifice, Isaac asks, “Here are the fire and the wood but where is the lamb for the holocaust?” (Ibid. verse 7) Abraham replies, “God himself will provide the sheep for the holocaust.” (Ibid. verse 8) Abraham then goes to the mountain to sacrifice his son, but at the last minute an angel of God stops him. Afterwards, Abraham finds a ram and slaughters it as the burnt offering. See how Abraham sacrifices a ram and not a lamb. Abraham’s faith that God would supply the sacrificial lamb did not go unnoticed. God Himself indeed provides the lamb, His own Son Jesus Christ, to be the sacrifice. In the story of Abraham God’s provision of a ram has a “now and not yet” dimension. God provision to Abraham points to the ultimate provision which is the Cross of Christ. In this story, Abraham as the Father represents God the Father and Isaac represents Jesus. The ram, which is caught by its horns in the thicket, foreshadows Jesus when the crown of thorns is placed upon His head. Some teach that Isaac would have been a grown man at the time of the sacrifice and could have easily overpowered the elderly Abraham. The elderly Abraham would not have been able to lift the grown man Isaac unto the altar of Sacrifice. Isaac, like Jesus, voluntarily resigned Himself to the sacrifice.

[\[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson – Abraham\]](#)

Moses and the Passover (Exodus 11-12:30): The next person we look at is Moses and the Passover. Moses was chosen by God to free the Israelites from the bondage of slavery by the Egyptians. God had sent nine separate plagues to show the pharaoh that the God of the Israelites, Whom Moses worshiped was indeed the one true God and the false gods of the Egyptians were powerless. When the pharaoh refused to let the Israelites to go, the tenth and final plague was rendered. God sent an angel at midnight to destroy every first-born in the land of Egypt. To protect the Israelites, God had very specific instructions on to how to prepare for the Passover. “Tell the whole community of Israel: On the tenth of this month every one of your families must procure for itself a lamb, one apiece for each household. If a family is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join the nearest household in procuring one and shall share in the lamb in proportion to the number of persons who partake of it...That same night they shall eat its roasted flesh with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.” (Ibid 12:3-8) We will see in the next lesson how Jesus is the new spotless lamb of the Passover. Through the blood of the lambs, the Israelites were saved and were freed from the bondage of slavery. Jesus is the Lamb of God, by His blood we are saved from our sins. Through His sacrifice, we are freed from the bondage of sin and death.

Isaiah (Isaiah 52-53): The final example is from the prophet Isaiah. Many times during the seasons of Advent and Lent the Church reads from the prophet Isaiah. In the book of Isaiah we read his prophecy of the coming Messiah. He speaks of a very different type of Messiah. Not one of military or political power, but one that would be highly exalted, “See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted;” (Is. 52:13) but then in an instant brought to be killed. “Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our suffering that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed...Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, A grave was assigned him among the wicked and burial place with evildoers, Though he had done no wrong nor spoken

Can you go to Confession too much? Yes and No. No, if we go with a contrite soul and seeking forgiveness of sins then no there is no limit. There is no limit to Confession because there is no limit to God’s forgiveness and mercy. We should see frequent Confession as assisting us in ripping out the root of our sinful past, and pursuing the love of God. If we are doing neither then we are like tepid, lukewarm water, which the Lord spits out. “One of the principal reasons for esteeming frequent Confession highly is that, when practiced as it should be, it is an infallible safeguard against tepidity. Perhaps it is this conviction that makes the Church recommend so strongly...frequent or weekly Confession.”[47] Yes, if we are going due to scrupulosity – obsessing over sins already forgiven.

“Let us thank God for the many times he has forgiven us. Let us ask that we may never fail to approach that source of divine mercy, which is Confession.”[48] “Christ, the spotless Lamb, has come to cleanse us of our sins; not only of our serious sins, but of those deficiencies in purity of intention and of love that occur in our ordinary life. We should examine today how much love we put into receiving the sacrament of penance and whether we go to receive it as frequently as Our Lord asks us to.”[49]

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Consecration to the Blessed Virgin

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

My queen and my mother,
I give myself entirely to you
And, in proof of my affection,
I give you my eyes, my ears, my tongue,
My heart, my whole being without reserve.
Since I am your own,
Keep me and guard me as your property and possession. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Oratory: Place of Prayer – Totus Tuus Prayer

To purchase the Oratory: Place of Prayer Book - <http://remnantband.bandcamp.com/merch>

Parable of the tax-collector and the Pharisee – Luke 18:13
 Parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32
 Jesus saying He has power to forgive sins – Matthew 9:6
 Jesus gives the power to forgive sins to his apostles – John 20:20

How do we seek God’s forgiveness? We seek God’s forgiveness in the way He set up for us, the Sacrament of Confession. We hear in the Scriptures how this Sacrament was established, “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.’”[44] The ordinary means of reconciliation between man and God is sacramental confession. Although sacramental confession is the ordinary means and the means established by Jesus for reconciliation, God in His mercy can also reconcile those who do not know the ordinary means of reconciliation. The penitent however must know they have done wrong, have contrition or sorrow for their sin, and be resolved to sin no more, thus amending their life. “Through the sacrament of Penance we obtain as well the graces we need to fight against or overcome those defects which are perhaps deeply rooted in our character and which are often the cause of our discouragement and dependency.”[45]

As mentioned earlier, Jesus seeks to forgive not just once and for all, but for all us at every moment. This is why frequent confession is so important. Sin binds us up, and holds us close to the devil. When we go to confession, and receive absolution we are freed from the chains holding us down. “Just as the dead man came forth still bound up, so he who goes to Confession is still guilty. So that he should be freed of his sins Our Lord has said to the minister ‘Unbind him and let him go...’”[46]

MUSIC – “Lord I need You” by Matt Maher at World Youth Day – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:31

<http://youtu.be/DCLScV-0hD4>

At the vigil, with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, and 3.5 Million Catholic youth, Matt Maher sang in front of the Blessed Sacrament this song. It speaks of how we need Christ, and nothing else. We fall on Christ when temptation comes and tries to bind us up. We confess with our lips and our hearts that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we seek His love, forgiveness, and mercy.

any falsehood.” (Is. 53:4-5, 7-9) Jesus is the Lamb of God who was led to the slaughter. He takes away the sin of the world through His death. He was harshly treated yet he submitted and opened not his mouth. **How else is Jesus like the lamb that Isaiah describes?**

Lamb of God (Part II) – Lesson and Discussion

“Behold, the Lamb of God”

Please read Link to Liturgy Lesson – Lamb of God (Part I) first to better understand the theme of this lesson.

Now that we have taken a look at the pre-figurement of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God in the Old Testament, we turn our attention to the New Testament where we see Jesus fulfill his role as Lamb of God. We will also see how the Church, the apostles, and Church Fathers made the connection of Jesus being the Lamb of God.

The Last Supper/Mass (Luke 22:14-20)

On Holy Thursday, the night before Jesus was to be handed over, He had prepared one last meal with His apostles. Jesus said He “eagerly desired to eat this Passover” (Lk. 22:15) Jesus is now the Lamb of God who is about to be sacrificed. The unleavened bread He gives to the apostles as His Body and Blood. “Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.’ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.’” (Lk. 22:19-20)

There is a lot to unpack from this event. First, this is the time of the Passover. This is the third Passover of Jesus’s public ministry. The first was at the Baptism of the Lord, when the Blessed Trinity was revealed. The Father’s voice was heard from the cloud and the Holy Spirit hovered over the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The second Passover was the feeding of the five thousand followed by the Bread of Life discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of the Saint John’s Gospel. The third and final Passover, which Jesus “eagerly desired to eat,” is that of His Sacrifice, His total gift of self. Jesus is the unblemished lamb that would be led to the slaughter. In Moses’ time, the blood of the lamb was spread on the doorposts and a covenant was made with God and His people. On Holy Thursday, a new covenant with the perfect lamb’s blood, Jesus Christ’s, would be shed so that the covenant

could never be broken. **Why couldn't the covenant be broken?** Jesus is God. He is eternal and therefore the covenant is the "new and eternal covenant." [3] The death of Jesus is perfect, a pure sacrifice that is lacking nothing. The covenant is eternal as long as we remain with Jesus in His bride, the Church. He also offers the unleavened bread, which He says is His very body. In the original Passover, the Jewish people eat the unleavened bread with the meat of the lamb. In the Mass, Jesus is the Lamb of God; the Word made flesh gives Himself as bread. At the second Passover of His public ministry He says, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." [4] A year later at His third Passover, the Last Supper, Jesus fulfills His promise "the bread that I will give is my flesh." Within the context of the Passover, unleavened bread becomes the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. At this moment the Passover ceases to exist and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is instituted as the "new and eternal covenant."

[See also Link to Liturgy Video Lesson - Corpus Christi]

Jesus says "do this in memory of me." In today's society we misunderstand what Jesus is saying. He does not mean, recall what I did 2,000 years ago and look upon it fondly. "The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is his Body. In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real. This is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: every time Passover is celebrated, the Exodus events are made present to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them." [5] In the same way that the Israelites celebrated Passover as real and present, Catholics understand Jesus Christ to be real and present in the Mass. This is not a mere spiritual presence, but a true or physical presence. The Mass is not just a memorial service and it is also not a re-killing of Jesus. "The Church teaches that the Mass is the re-presentation of the sacrifice of Calvary, which also is invariably misunderstood by anti-Catholics. The Catholic Church does *not* teach that the Mass is a re-crucifixion of Christ, who does *not* suffer and die again in the Mass." [6] People and time change, but the one true sacrifice does not. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was once and for all. "The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*: The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on

der of nature while we strive to live and stay in the order of Grace.

MOVIE – The Dark Knight – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:42

http://youtu.be/f8yHvKYa_us

The Joker tells several different stories of how he received his scars. All scars have stories. We probably all have a scar or two on us. The scars of sin are much deeper and last longer than any scar we receive on our body. **Discuss a scar that you have. What was the story?** We are still left with the scars of our past. Our tendency to want to sin is still within us. However, frequent confession and living the sacramental life can help us conquer our desire to sin. Our scars, however many or deep, don't define us. We are fallen, yet redeemed; sinners, yet offered mercy; born in the order of nature, and born again in the order of Grace. Saint Paul says, "where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through justification for eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." [40]

What did Jesus come to do? Jesus came to forgive all men and reconcile us with God. "Jesus has come to bring forgiveness. He is the Redeemer, the Reconciler. He does not forgive just once, neither does he forgive mankind in the abstract, or as a whole. He forgives each one of us as often as, repentant, we draw close to him...He forgives us and He gives us a new birth; He opens the gates of grace to us once again so that we can – filled with hope – continue on our way." [41]

Jesus who takes away the sin of the world continuously goes out in search for sinner and reaches out those who seek forgiveness. Matthew writes, "The Son of Man has come to save what was lost." [42] In the book of Revelation it says, Jesus "freed us from our sins by his blood." [43] **What other stories in the Bible do we see Jesus forgiving of sins?**

Activity – Scripture Search

If a large group, have them get in smaller groups, or as individuals try and search for stories or parables about Jesus forgiving of sins. Here is a small list of some that they could find:

Woman caught in adultery – John 8:11
The Woman who anointed His feet – Luke 7:48
Forgives and Heals Paralytic – Mark 2:1-12

guilt of original sin and punishments due to original sin.

The world however is still sick and needs a physician. Jesus is the divine physician that heals the soul. People may ask why there is sickness, death, and destruction in the world. Humanity and the natural order are still fallen, as consequences of original sin. Not all men desire to live a life of sanctifying grace. Not all men desire or believe in the reward of everlasting life. All of humanity, the baptized and the unbaptized, struggle with the “loss of many other gifts which we would have inherited from Adam and Eve, had they remained faithful to God.”[37] The difference in the struggle is that the baptized have the grace necessary to overcome our fallen, sinful nature.

What gifts were lost through Original Sin? While Baptism does not give back these preternatural gifts lost by Original Sin, it does give us the necessary grace to endure the burden of our struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. “Before they sinned, our first parents enjoyed the gifts of bodily immortality, integrity, and infused knowledge.”[38]

Bodily immortality – This means that our body would not have died. Although our body will die we are promised, as revealed by God, that our body will rise from the dead and be reunited with our soul.

Integrity – This means that we have concupiscence, which is the struggle between our desires and our reason. We know what is good, but lack the courage to do the good. Our will has been weakened and does not act in accord with our reason. Saint Paul says, “What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate.”[39]

Infused knowledge – This means that we are in ignorance, our minds have been darkened and we have to struggle to learn.

Original Sin has therefore affected both body and soul. Our body will die and the faculties or powers of our soul, namely intellect and will, have been wounded. Once again, Baptism does not wipe away these effects, but it does give us the grace necessary to struggle against them and live a life of grace. Through the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ we have been redeemed. In other words we live in the order of nature (our fallen nature) but have been offered a new life, through Baptism, a life in the order of grace (redemption). We still struggle with or-

the cross; only the manner of offering is different.’ ‘And since in who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner...this sacrifice is truly propitiatory.”[7]

However, his Paschal Meal, His very Body is given to us all at every moment. “In the New Testament, the memorial takes on new meaning. When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ’s Passover, and it is made present: the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains ever present. ‘As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which ‘Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed’ is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out.”[8]

St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, and the Church Fathers

The image of Jesus being the ‘Lamb of God’ did not go unnoticed by the first apostles or the early Church Fathers.

St. Paul wrote, “Your boasting is not appropriate. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our **paschal lamb**, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”[9]

St. Peter wrote, “You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers...with the precious blood of Christ, **like that of a lamb** without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake.”[10]

The Church Fathers also saw Jesus as the true Lamb of God.

St. Gregory of Nyssa (383AD) wrote, “Jesus offered himself for us, Victim and Sacrifice, and Priest as well, and **‘Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.’** When did he do this? When he made his own Body food and his own Blood drink for his disciples; for this much is clear enough to anyone, that a sheep cannot be eaten by a man unless its being eaten is preceded by its being slaughtered. This giving of his own Body to his disciples for eating clearly indicates that the sacrifice of the **Lamb** has now been completed.”[11]

The Church and Book of Revelation

The Church has always been seen as the spotless bride of Christ. The Second Vatican Council wrote, “The Church, further, which is called ‘that Jerusalem which is above’ and ‘our mother’, is described as the spotless spouse of the **spotless lamb**. It is she whom Christ ‘loved and for whom he delivered himself up that he might sanctify her.’ It is she whom he unites to himself by an unbreakable alliance, and whom he constantly ‘nourishes and cherishes.’”[12]

The book of Revelation has over thirty references to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Revelation describes a wedding feast banquet and at the center of this heavenly feast is the slain lamb. “Then I saw standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and the elders, a Lamb that seemed to have been slain.”[13] The lamb surrounded by saints, martyrs and virgins, who render him the praise and glory due him as God. “I looked again and heard the voices of many angels who surrounded the throne and the living creatures and the elders. They were countless in number, and they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing.’ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, everything in the universe, cry out: ‘To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor, glory and might forever and ever.’ The four living creatures answered, ‘Amen,’ and the elders fell down and worshiped.”[14]

We see from the beginning to the end of the Scriptures and in the Church that Jesus as the Lamb of God is an important and central figure. This is celebrated at every Mass.

The Mass

Finally, much of this lesson has pointed to the Mass. **Where in the Liturgy do we hear the title ‘Lamb of God?’** The most predominant place is after the sign of peace when the priest and congregation chant, sing, or recite the Agnus Dei ‘Lamb of God.’ “It may be repeated as often as necessary, but the conclusion is always ‘Grant us Peace.’”[15] In America it is usually repeated three times. Once everyone kneels, the priest raises the host and chalice and says, “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”[16] At that moment we are taken back to the exact words of St. John the Baptist said in the Gospel Reading today, we are able to be aware of the magnitude of the mo-

of condition, purity and innocence of life, and satisfaction of sacrifice and offering.”[31] By becoming a lamb, Jesus was raised as a King of Kings. If we are to be like Christ, then we must be like lambs. We are to show humility, patience and obedience just as Christ did.

Saint Paul says, “The devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”[32] Satan cannot touch a soul if we do not get close to him and we remain close to Christ. We would not go near a chained, rabid dog; in the same way, let us not go near Satan. Let us stay close to Christ, Our Blessed Mother, and the Church, so that in the end of our life we can celebrate in superiority of Jesus at the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Frequent Forgiveness – Lesson and Discussion

“who takes away the sin of the World!”

What does St. John the Baptist mean when he says the “sin of the world”?

“The sacred text says ‘the sin of the world,’ in the singular to make it absolutely clear that every kind of sin is taken away: Christ came to free us from original sin, which in Adam affected all men, and from all personal sins.”[33]

We can be confident however because Jesus Christ is our only hope against both original and personal sin. “Sin of the world means all types of sin: original sin, which through Adam, also passed to his descendants, and the personal sins of men and women throughout the ages. Our hope of salvation is in Jesus. He is himself a strong call to hope, because Christ has come to forgive and to cure the wounds of sin.”[34]

What were the consequences of Original Sin? “The consequences of original sin and of all men’s personal sins put the world as a whole in the sinful condition aptly described in St. John’s expression, ‘the sin of the world.’ This expression can also refer to the negative influence exerted on people by communal situations and social structures that are the fruit of men’s sins.”[35] “Before the Fall, our First Parents were endowed with sanctifying grace, which meant they possessed the supernatural life of charity and a right to enter Heaven.”[36] Through the sacrament of Baptism we are given sanctifying grace. By virtue of Baptism, we are born from above (Jn. 3:3-5) and made children of God. Baptism gives back what was lost, it wipes away the

is already ‘the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.’...He is submitting himself entirely to his Father’s will: out of love He consents to this baptism of death for the remission of our sins. The Father’s voice responds to the Son’s acceptance, proclaiming his entire delight in his Son. The Spirit whom Jesus possessed in fullness from his conception comes to ‘rest on him.’ Jesus will be the source of the Spirit for all mankind.”[26]

When we think of a lamb we do not think of it as the king of all the animals. We see a lamb as an animal of prey in the animal kingdom. Jesus is both the ‘Lion of Judah,’ but is also the ‘Lamb of God.’ The image of Lion and Lamb are important in understanding the first and second comings of Christ. In the first coming of Christ, Christ comes as the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. He says to us, “I did not come to condemn the world but to save the world.”[27] In the second coming of Christ, which will be the end of the world, He comes as the Lion who will judge the living and the dead. Saint Paul says of the second coming, “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power.”[28] The prophet Isaiah, who wrote 750 years prior to the first coming of Christ, prophesizes both comings of Christ. He writes, “Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; The calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them.”[29]

St. John the Baptist conveys how little his power is compared to that of Jesus Christ. We too must realize that any power and authority in this world is nothing compared to that of Jesus Christ. We are given power and authority only because God permits it. “Confronted with the greatness of Christ, John observes his own littleness and confesses: ‘This is he, of whom I said, ‘after me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me’. Enlightened from above, he recognizes the absolute primacy of Christ and of his mission...In comparison, with Christ every apostle is nothing, or rather has value, and is able to act, only insofar as he depends humbly and entirely on him.”[30]

“Jesus became the spotless Lamb, who offered himself up with absolute docility and meekness to make reparation for the sins of men, for their crimes and their betrayals. This is why we find the title he is given so expressive, for, comments Fray Luis de Leon, Lamb, referring to Christ, means three things: meekness

ment. We are gazing at our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. We are at the Last Supper, the supper of the Paschal Lamb, Jesus Christ.

MUSIC – Agnus Dei VIII (De Angelis) - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:28

http://youtu.be/UjK_mbbd8ko

The Agnus Dei prayer has been put to many melodies in the course of the history of the Church. Here is an example of plainchant from the Missa de Angelis.

How old is the Agnus Dei in the Liturgy? The Agnus Dei at the Communion Rite has been in the Liturgy since the 6th century. Agnus Dei is also found in the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* which has been in the Liturgy since the 2nd and 3rd centuries. In the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* we pray “Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.”

How is the image of the Lamb of God portrayed? In many churches there are stain glass windows or some sort of artwork portraying the Lamb of God. “Various aspects show the animal balancing a staff by its right front leg, with a wound in its chest pouring blood into a chalice, representing Christ’s Blood in the Passion; the staff bearing a flag signifying Christ’s victory in the Resurrection; the lamb resting or standing on a closed book with its seven sealed streamers symbolizing Christ as the judge. The lamb is the emblem of docility; ‘harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly, he never opened his mouth like the lamb that is led to the slaughter house’ (Isaiah 53:7). But the lamb triumphant is portrayed symbolically in the song ascribed to St. Ambrose, ‘Now at the Lamb’s high royal feast.’[17]

[\[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - The Virtue of Docility \(Part I\)\]](#)

[\[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - The Virtue of Docility \(Part 2\)\]](#)

Why is the image of Jesus as the Lamb of God important to the Christian? The Christian imitates the Lamb of God in patience, docility, and resignation to do the will of God. “In the Old Law a lamb was one of the usual animals of sacrifice. Jesus Christ is the one true Lamb, who atoned for and effaced the sins of the world in His blood. His designation as a Lamb refers also

to the patience and voluntary resignation with which He subjected Himself to suffering and death.”[18] The Christian must have the voluntary resignation to do the will of God, patience in discerning the will of God, and fortitude in uniting our will with the will of God. The Blessed Virgin lived perfectly Saint John the Baptist’s words, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” The Lamb of God was all that Mary beheld from the annunciation forward. We ask the Blessed Virgin Mary’s intercession to better practice the virtues of patience and resignation to the holy will of God.

Jesus’ Superiority – Lesson and Discussion

“After me comes a man who ranks before me”

As we hear from the words of St. John, Jesus is superior to him because He reigns over heaven and earth. However, despite Jesus’ superiority, He chooses to be a humble servant.

How is Jesus superior to John the Baptist? It seems pretty obvious how Jesus is superior to St. John the Baptist. Jesus is the Son of God; He is the second person of the Trinity. St. John is not divine; he is the forerunner and servant of the Son of God. However, we have to put ourselves in the shoes of the disciples of St. John the Baptist. He had many followers, and now he is telling them that Jesus is more powerful and has more authority than he does. St. John proclaims Jesus’ superiority when he says, “After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.”[19] Here St. John “shows us the divinity of Christ” because the Son is eternally begotten from the Father in a way that no human has, is, or will ever be.[20] Pope St. Gregory the Great writes, “He [Jesus] is not limited by the ties of his birth; for although he is born of his mother in time, he was generated by his Father outside of time.”[21]

The title ‘Lamb of God’ describes the divinity of Jesus, for there is only one unblemished Lamb of God. He is the one and only sacrificial Lamb because He is the one and only begotten Son of the Father. Because there is only one Lamb, there is only one pure, unblemished, and acceptable sacrifice. The title Lamb of God also describes the mission of Jesus to take away the sins of the world. He is the sacrificial Lamb that takes away the sins of the world and of whom God is well pleased. “Christ’s divinity shines forth: the Only-Begotten of the Father, he is God like the Father; when he took human nature his divinity was not diminished. Yet he hid it, almost as if annihilating it when he took the form of a servant and abased himself to the state of a lamb of-

fered in holocaust. But precisely by means of this sacrifice, which opens into the resurrection, he recovers his full glory as Son of God, and gains the power of sharing it with all men, redeeming them from sin and presenting them to the Father as sons.”[22]

What impact does the Baptism of the Lord have on John the Baptist?

John the Baptist was present at the Baptism of our Lord when the Father said, “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.”[23] St. John the Baptist says, “I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God.”[24] St. John is a witness to Christ, that is what he was born to do and it is that vocation that he fulfills in his life and works.

St. John the Baptist reveals a glimpse into the life of the Holy Trinity. “It [the Baptism of the Lord] is one of the key points in our Lord’s life, in which the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is revealed.”[25] John the Baptist speaks of the dove, the Holy Spirit, descending upon Jesus. He also hears God’s voice upon baptizing Jesus.

VIDEO – Airman Surprises His Teen Son by Dressing as a Football Player – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:48

<http://youtu.be/Y-22-qNM9c0>

There is no perfect analogy for the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. We can see the Father as the Lover, and the Son as the Beloved, and the Holy Spirit as the shared love. The lover, beloved, and shared love is eternal without a beginning or an end. In this video we see the shared love between the Father and the Son. We are invited into this love as we witness the homecoming of a human father to his son. St. John the Baptist was a witness to the Blessed Trinity at the Baptism of the Lord and, by virtue of the sacrament of Baptism; each Christian becomes a witness of indwelling and exchange of love, which is the Blessed Trinity.

How does Jesus use his superiority? Jesus takes on the embodiment of the title ‘Lamb of God’ at every stage of his life. He was obedient to the will of the Father and to will of His Mother Mary. In today’s Gospel we see that Jesus is obedient to being baptized. “The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God’s suffering Servant....He