

## The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 248, 392, 306, 391

The INTROIT

(Ps.28:8,9,1)

*P: The Lord is the Strength of His people;*

**C: He is the saving Strength of His anointed.**

*P: Save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance;*

**C: feed them also and lift them up forever.**

*P: Unto Thee will I cry, O Lord, my Rock; be not silent unto me;*

**C: lest, if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.**

The COLLECT

Lord of all power and might, who art the Author and Giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of Thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of Thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Exodus 20:1-17 (NKJV)

And God spoke all these words, saying: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

The GRADUAL

(Ps.90:13:1; 31:1,2)

*P: Return, O Lord, how long?*

**C: And let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants.**

P: Lord, Thou hast been our Dwelling place in all generations.  
C: **Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**  
P: In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed:  
C: **deliver me in Thy righteousness; bow down Thine ear to me, deliver me speedily. Hallelujah!**

### The EPISTLE

**Romans 6:3-11 (NKJV)**

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Ps. 119:124)

P: Hallelujah! O Lord, deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy and teach me Thy statutes. I am Thy servant, give me understanding:  
C: **that I may know Thy testimonies. Hallelujah!**

### The HOLY GOSPEL

**St. Matthew 5:20-26 (NKJV)**

“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.”

## Romans 6:3-11 — “Or Do You Not Know”

### INTRODUCTION

- I. OR DO YOU NOT KNOW
- II. UNITED TOGETHER IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH
- III. RECKON YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED TO SIN

### CONCLUSION

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 248, 392, 306, 391

### Romans 6:3-11 — “Or Do You Not Know”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The Epistle reading appointed for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity is Romans 6:3-11:

**Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### INTRODUCTION

Christians often wonder concerning themselves, **“How do I live in this world as a Christian?”** The Christian faces a daily dichotomy and paradox. For when a person is regenerated by the Holy Spirit that person finds himself living in a world of which he is no longer a part. In the world but not of the world is the condition of the believer in Christ. Likewise the believing Christian is simultaneously living in the flesh but is of the spirit. The flesh is dead in sin but the spirit is alive in the way of faith. Thus the believer is simultaneously saint and sinner. The believer is regenerated in the Spirit so that he is alive to God in Christ Jesus. Yet the believer also daily encounters the lusts of the sinful flesh that still inheres to his being.

St. Paul addresses this dichotomy and paradox in today’s text, and he answers for us the question as to how we are to live in this world as true Christians.

#### I. OR DO YOU NOT KNOW

**“Or do you-all not know?”** This is the question that our text sets before us. **“Are you agnostic?”** This Greek word is the source of our word for agnostic. This is what St. Paul asks us? **“Are you agnostic?”**

Sometimes when Christians are faced with questions of the faith that challenge them deeply they will respond saying, **“Well, I don’t know about that. After all, I’m not a theologian.”**

In today's text St. Paul challenges this in the strongest terms. His expectation is that all who have been regenerated by the Spirit WILL know. After all, this is what Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would do for His disciples. In John 14:26 He promises, **“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”** When a person chooses to plead agnosticism that person pronounces himself to be one who has rejected the work of the Holy Spirit, for the very reason that the Holy Spirit is poured out from heaven in Baptism is that the baptized person should be regenerated as a believer in Christ and to receive the true faith by which a person both is known by God and knows God. Yes, in Baptism God promises to convert the agnostic into a theologian. This is God's promise and we know that He does not lie.

This is why St. Paul presents the challenge, **“Or do you not know?”** His full expectation is that those who hear him will remember what the Holy Spirit has taught them. He fully expects all baptized Christians to remember what they have been catechized and to be turned again to the truth.

Living as a Christian is not as many would claim. It is not a difficult thing. It is the easiest thing in the world. Why is it so easy? Because all of the work has already been done for us! Jesus said that living as a Christian or a member of kingdom of God is a matter of being born into it. No one is born by one's own efforts. From one's conception to one's expulsion from the womb into the world, nothing is done by the one who is born except those things that flow from being alive. It is the same for one who is born of God. God does all the work and we simply live according to the life that we have received from Him.

Truly it is impossible for us to become believers by anything that we do. This must be worked for us by God. Thus He has provided the means by which this shall be worked for us. He has provided the means of salvation, that is, the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments of the Gospel.

Faith comes by means of the Gospel, which God has attached to the water and the bread and the wine. In Baptism we are regenerated by means of water and the Spirit. And this is a miracle that is beyond what we can understand. For in Baptism we are made to die to the world and to sin so that we also are raised up to the new life that is in Christ Jesus, the new life of the true faith. This is what St. Paul challenges us not to forget.

**Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

This is what we are taught in Baptism. Baptism is the beginning of our catechesis. Baptism is the miracle of new life in the knowledge of God's mercy, grace, and peace. Then we are blessed to live in this renewed knowledge of God, the very knowledge that Adam and Eve abandoned by choosing to eat of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. In order to undo this union of Good with Evil, in order to sanctify those who had become corrupted by sin, Jesus had to be made to be sin for us and to be crucified, dead and buried on our behalf. Having been raised on our behalf, He commanded that Baptism be administered so that we would be baptized into Him and into His death by which sin and death and the power of the devil are made powerless over us through faith. Now we are free to walk in this newness of life that we have been born into through Baptism.

## II. UNITED TOGETHER IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH

St. Paul explains this new life into which the Holy Spirit regenerates us.

**For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.**

This is the key to knowing and understanding what it means that we should walk in newness of life. St. Paul proclaims that we have been united together in the likeness of His death. The Greek words say that we exist as those who have been *planted together* or *germinated together* in the *homoiomati* or the *form* or *likeness* of His death.

In 1 Corinthians St. Paul chastises the congregation for having forgotten what this means. For they had forgotten and had become agnostic in their ways. He very carefully and forthrightly catechizes them again, saying, **“For as often as you-all eat this bread and drink this cup you-all do proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”**

This is the new life into which we are baptized. St. Paul explains further in 1 Corinthians: **“Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.”**

The Lord’s death is the payment of the guilt of the sin of the world. In Baptism we are planted together or germinated together in the likeness of His death. Thus the guilt of sin is buried and we are raised up to walk in the newness of life. We are baptized into Christ Jesus or planted together into His body. We are baptized into the newness of life in the unity of the one true faith. We are made to be one again in the likeness or form or image of God. Christ died to sin once for all. Into this one death for all we are baptized so that together in the body of Christ we are all dead to sin. We are to come continually to the communion of His body to partake of the oneness of His body and to drink the forgiveness and life of His blood. This is the new life into which we are baptized and germinated together. This is the new life in which we are called to walk. Together we confess our sins and receive the blessed word of absolution and together we rise up in response to the altar call to commune with God in the Passover meal of forgiveness and life.

## III. RECKON YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED TO SIN

This is what St. Paul teaches us when he says, **“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

This is the reckoning to which the Holy Spirit calls us in Baptism. What God declares concerning us as being united with Christ in His death so that we are declared to be the very righteousness of God in Christ, this declaration is what we are to reckon concerning ourselves. We are to count ourselves as God Himself has declared. He has declared in our baptism that we are now sons of God.

In John 1:12 we are told, **“But as many as received Him He gave the authority children of God to be generated, to those believing into the name of Him.”**

In Matthew 28 the Lord Jesus declares this authority entrusted to the holy office.

**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**

It is in accord with this authority that we are to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Have you been baptized within the body of Christ? Have you been baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit so that you are now united in the body of Christ where this authority of heaven and earth is exercised in accord with the Gospel? Are you baptized into the body of Christ where the Holy Communion is administered in accord with the Baptism by which you are united together with all who are in Christ? This is the reckoning that we each need to apply to ourselves. This is the examination that every head of every household is to apply to all who are under the authority that God has entrusted to him.

According to this reckoning, we are commanded to eat and to drink often, proclaiming the Lord’s death till He comes, this same once for all death into which we are baptized together. This is the newness of life by which we are to reckon ourselves. This is the reckoning that God has authorized for us in Christ Jesus.

## CONCLUSION

Would you not agree that according to this reckoning of God that living as a true Christian is the simplest thing in the world? After all, God has done it all for us. All that we do is to walk in the way that He has prepared for us. He has provided the holy office by which He baptizes us into Christ together. He has provided the Holy Supper of His Holy Communion by which we are renewed in the life that is given with Christ’s blood. He has poured out His Holy Spirit into our hearts so that we are continually taught the truth by which we have life together in the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit continually works to covert us from our self-chosen agnosticism to the fullness of the knowledge of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Has God not made life easy for His children? Yes, the world will fight against us, but what is that when we reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord? If we truly hear and believe that in Baptism we are made to be dead to sin, what can rule over us? The power of fear and guilt no longer has any hold on us. We need only to remember what the Holy Spirit has taught us and to listen to the urgings with which He urges us. **“Come to Me,”** Jesus commands, **“and I will give you rest.”** The Holy Spirit continually brings this to our recollection. In the true Church we submit to the divine liturgy where we receive again and again the blessed means of grace by which we are united with Christ and kept in His grace, mercy, and peace, proclaiming His death till He comes. What could be easier or more blessed than this? In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds

in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.