

# The Gospel of John

If you have read the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke you will have noticed substantial similarities in language, stories and content providing a summary of the life of Jesus. For this reason, they are called the “synoptic” Gospels. The Gospel of John is quite different.

Sometimes called the “spiritual” Gospel because its focus is on the spiritual significance of the Good News, it is useful to be aware of how different John’s Gospel is.

This Gospel was the last to be written (around 100 A.D.), probably in Ephesus. Perhaps John did not feel the need to repeat what was already available in the Synoptic Gospels; he concentrated on the deeper meaning of the revelation in Jesus Christ. He has a very distinctive style, which is easy to identify.

**Misunderstandings and irony.** John delights in a play on words which can carry different meanings. The way Jesus speaks to Nicodemus about being born “again”; or to the woman at the well about “living water” are good examples.

**Alternatives.** John goes in for stark alternatives, thereby confronting his readers with clear choices: light or darkness; life or death; good or evil; truth or falsehood.

**Signs.** John presents miracles and healings as signs of the Kingdom. He highlights seven significant signs: 1 - the Cana wedding; 2 - the cure of the official’s son; 3 - the healing of the paralytic who had been ill for 38 years; 4 - the multiplication of the loaves; 5 - walking on the Sea of Galilee; 6 - the healing of the man born blind and finally, 7 - the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

**Discourses.** In contrast to the other Gospels, John records long reflections, meditations and even prayers of Jesus. The Last Supper conversation of Jesus stands out as an example.

Some of the speeches of Jesus give an insight into who Jesus really is (the “I am...” sayings), and his relationship with the Father.

**The Messiah.** Scholars, when speaking about who the Messiah (the Christ) really is, use the term “Christology”. John’s Christology is made clear in the opening words of his Gospel: Jesus is the pre-existent “Word” of God; “made flesh”; and commissioned by the Father to reveal the Father’s love and win people’s hearts for the Kingdom of God.

St Jerome called John’s approach to the central mystery of our faith “an eagle’s eye view”. A soaring eagle is the symbol for John. John sees the whole mystery of faith from creation to the end of time as one great revelation of glory: the glory of Father, Son and Spirit.

Given the history of the Jewish people, great care needs to be taken over John’s use of the word “the Jews”, especially concerning responsibility for the death of Jesus. It is more accurate to refer to “Jewish leaders” or “Judeans” and thus avoid any hint of anti-Semitism.

John’s Gospel remains one of the greatest treasures of revelation and an unending source of spiritual insight and growth.

For study purposes the Gospel can be divided into four sections:

1. Prologue (Chapters 1: 1-18)
2. Book of Signs (Chapters 1:19-12:50)
3. Book of Glory (13:1-20:31)
4. Epilogue (21:1-25).



Fra Angelico, detail of St John the Evangelist from the ceiling of the Niccoline Chapel, Vatican Palace

## SUNDAY MASS

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you, that your prophets be found true. Hear the prayers of your servant, and of your people Israel.

**FIRST READING:** Sirach 27:30-28:7.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Psalm 103.

### RESPONSE:

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in mercy.

1. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within me, his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits. **R**
2. It is the Lord who forgives all your sins, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with mercy and compassion. **R**
3. He will not always find fault; nor persist in his anger forever. He does not treat us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our faults. **R**
4. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so strong his mercy for those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far from us does he remove our transgressions. **R**

**SECOND READING:** Romans 14:7-9.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, alleluia! A new commandment I give to you, says the Lord, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. Alleluia.

**GOSPEL:** Matthew 18:21-35.

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

How precious is your mercy, O God! The children of men seek shelter in the shadow of your wings.

## THE WEEK AHEAD

# Live the Word

### Mon 14 Sep EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 78; John 3:13-17

'Empty' is how Jesus asks us to be in relation to others and God – empty of selfishness, self-importance, the incessant need to be right, and the need to take care only of ourselves. For to be emptied is to be filled by God.

### Tue 15 Sep Our Lady of Sorrows

Hebrews 5:7-9; Psalm 31; John 19:25-27

Tradition tells us that Mary endured seven major sorrows in her life. Her sorrows were a direct result of her relationship with Jesus. What does this say about what we can expect if we directly align our lives with Jesus?

### Wed 16 Sep Ss Cornelius, P & Cyprian, B, Ms

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13; Psalm 33; Luke 7:31-35

Made in God’s image, God has a special place, purpose and plan for each of our lives. All that is asked of us is that we trust in God’s love and caring for each of us. Place yourself today in God’s hands.

### Thu 17 Sep (St Robert Bellarmine, BD)

1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Psalm 118; Luke 7:36-50

Only in recognising that we are broken can we open our hearts to God’s saving power and receive the gift of love. We cannot possess love or possess God without first recognising our total need before God.

### Fri 18 Sep Liturgy of the Day

1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Psalm 17; Luke 8:1-3

Many of us fit our faith into our busy lives. Not so for Jesus’ female disciples. Theirs is a life turned over to Jesus completely, and in gratitude. Who deserves the credit for my life and its blessings?

### Sat 19 Sep (St Januarius, BM)

1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49; Psalm 56; Luke 8:4-15

Where we put our energy tells us how much we really want something. How much energy and enthusiasm do we put into our relationship with God, our faithfulness to prayer and the challenge to love unconditionally?

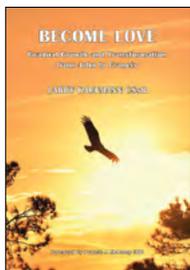
### Sun 20 Sep 25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 55:6-9; Psalm 145; Matthew 20:1-16

Many people see heaven as a reward for doing good. But God’s generosity is boundless and we are all given a share in God’s love and generosity, even if we have done nothing to deserve it.

(KEY: SOLEMNITY; FEAST; Memorial; (Optional Memorial)  
P=Pope; B=Bishop; M=Martyr; D=Doctor

In his latest book Fr Larry Kaufmann presents Pope Francis’ teaching on “the law of gradualness” in personal growth, using this insight as a key to unlocking John’s Gospel. He shows how Jesus patiently accompanies individuals like Nicodemus, the woman at the well, or doubting Thomas in a gradual coming to faith, stretching them beyond their imagined limitations.



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# *St Patrick's Catholic Church, Benoni, South Africa*

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*For our safety, the Parish remains closed at this time.*

Dear friends

13 September 2020

1. The Parish Office is open every Thursday from 9:00 to 12:00 if you wish to come in. You can also phone the office too during this time (011 845 2118). In the weeks ahead we will gradually open up more – we await the Government's directive.
2. Catechism will resume, God willing, with the new school term in January next year. Pupils will continue in the class they were in earlier this year.
3. If you wish to order the new monthly Southern Cross magazine, please phone Judy, the secretary, (Thursday mornings as above), to have one reserved for you. The cost is R30.00.  
You can also order the October to December *Living Faith* as well.

God bless you all.

Fr. David.

## **Prayer List at 13 September**

**Pray for all who are ill especially:** Bruce Herholdt; Stephen Zackey; Cole; Harry; Jenny Murphy; Sharon Jaffar; Rose Crammond; Sean Gallagher; Cleone; and Jenny.

*I offer the prayer of anointing for all who are ill.*

**Pray for all those who have died:** especially Anna Coco del Grande,  
*May they rest in peace and rise in glory.*

Please update this list on the WhatsApp Group or SMS Father David at 060 3272998.

## **Twenty- Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Sunday Missal p.392

Daily Missal p.1257

“Forgive...not seven times but seventy-seven times” (Matthew18:22).

On Friday it was nineteen years since two aeroplanes crashed into the Twin Towers in New York. One man who was in the Towers on that day recalls the memory. He still sees the flames and, in them, the faces of dead friends and colleagues. He was at work on the fifteenth floor of the South Tower when the World Trade Centre was his and he emerged unharmed but changed forever. “Seeing so many people killed and knowing that I was Osama bin Laden’s target too, changes you,” he said.

Even so, he recoiled when the news came that Bin Laden had been killed and he saw news videos of people wildly celebrating. “As a Christian, I felt that that kind of rejoicing at any person’s death didn’t feel right,” he said. Still, he struggles with forgiveness. “I have to search my soul about that. Even now I’m not there yet,” he admits.

For us, for anyone, even when the offence is tiny compared to a terrorist attack, we know how hard it is to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. Considering how the world has grown more divided and less forgiving over these last nineteen years, this call to forgive has become especially challenging.

Is it really possible to forgive one another “from the heart”, as Jesus urges us to do (Matthew 18:35)? No, it’s not possible in our strength alone! However, we know Christ, and through his Holy Spirit, we have all we need to become ambassadors for forgiveness and unity. Though we may not consider ourselves very important or influential, our witness counts! Just think: if everyone reading these words of Jesus today chose to become an agent of mercy, we might change the world.

*‘It is not in our power not to feel or to forget an offence; but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession’ (the Catechism of the Catholic church, 2843).’*

*Holy Spirit, give me such a heart.*

We are all looking forward to the day when we can return to mass at St. Patrick's. God willing, this day may be on the horizon. Without Sunday collections during lockdown, your financial support in donations and Dedicated Giving has been nothing short of wonderful. We are not out of the woods though and so may I ask you to continue your generous support at this time.

Our banking details (unchanged) for collections and donations are:

**St Patrick's Catholic Church**  
**Standard Bank: Branch code 013042**  
**Current Account No. 021095612**

Cash can be handed in on Thursdays at the parish office between 09h00 and 12h00 or kept until we return to mass. Thank you.

St Vincent de Paul Society supports all in need – irrespective of colour or creed – in our parish and beyond.

Donations can be made to:

Society of St Vincent de Paul, Nedbank, Northmead, Benoni  
Branch code: Universal or 19484200 Current Acc.No. 1012534707

Cash donations or clothing can be handed in at the Parish Office on a Thursday between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. or given to the chairman Aubrey Young (071 470 6444) or Dave Chennells (vice-chairman.) Please note that a receipt is always given for any cash donations.



**St Patrick's Holy Land Pilgrimage is moved to October 2021.**  
**There is one more place.**  
**Contact Fr David for details.**

## Links

### A. Online mass.

- i. "Catholic Mass today"- a daily TV mass on YouTube from the Loretto Abbey in Canada.
- ii. Holy Mass presided over by Pope Francis. Type "Shalom TV Pope's daily mass" in YouTube. It has an English commentary.
- iii. [Mass from the Jesuit community in Auckland Park is at 09h00 every Sunday. Go to YouTube "Jesuit Institute Sunday Mass".](#)
- iv. Radio daily mass at 12:30 (after midday) on Radio Veritas 576AM; DSTV audio 870 and [www.radioveritas.co.za](http://www.radioveritas.co.za): also an android app: "Radio Veritas South Africa"

### B. Prayer, Meditation and Reflection.

- i. App "Pray as you go" or [www.pray-as-you-go.org](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org) Short daily guided prayer by the English Jesuits.
- ii. "Re-imagining the Examen": download this free Jesuit app for a short daily guided reflection on your day to discern God's movement in your life.
- iii. **Six minutes of daily reflection, prayer and blessing** by Fr. David. This is available on the parish WhatsApp group, together with daily mass, Stations of the Cross, rosary, and an opportunity to have contact with other parishioners. SMS Fr. David on the parish phone at 060 327 2998

### C. Other suggestions.

- i. To receive the weekly parish bulletin by email – send your request to Tanya at [bookkeeper@stpatricksbenoni.co.za](mailto:bookkeeper@stpatricksbenoni.co.za) .
- ii. The Southern Cross is available at: [www.scross.co.za](http://www.scross.co.za)
- iii. Here is a practical, common sense suggestion for our mental wellbeing: [www.nhs.uk>conditions>coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk>conditions>coronavirus)
- iv. The parish website has the Sunday bulletin: [www.stpatricksbenoni.co.za](http://www.stpatricksbenoni.co.za)