

## Romans 8:12-17

In this lesson we hear that **if we follow our lower nature, we are enslaved and destined to death, but when we are moved by God's Spirit, we become God's children and heirs with Christ.** The Spirit makes this experience possible by prompting our lips to call upon God as Father with the same Aramaic word (Abba) that Jesus used. This new relationship means that we are no longer required to be led by baser instincts. Our heritage is life, while we must also learn to share in Christ's sufferings.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, <sup>14</sup>because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. <sup>17</sup>Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

## Isaiah 6:-1-8

Our first reading is **Isaiah's vision of the Lord and his prophetic commission**. The earthly temple becomes an icon for the temple in heaven. Isaiah is purged of his guilt and sin and responds to the Lord's call. The church hears in the thrice-holy song of the seraphim an anticipation of its praise of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

<sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup>And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

<sup>4</sup>At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

<sup>5</sup>“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

<sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup>With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

<sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

## John 3:1-17

In our gospel story **Nicodemus, one of the Pharisees, comes during the night to talk with Jesus.** Nicodemus is a figure used by the evangelist to represent a type of person who wants to believe but has difficulty understanding spiritual realities. Jesus tells him that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born anew through water and the Spirit. The inner meaning of the passage partly turns on the fact that “born anew” can also be understood as “born from on high,” and that the same Greek word means both wind and spirit. Jesus then tells Nicodemus of the Son of Man come down from heaven who will be lifted up, both on the cross to die for the world and to return to heaven in glory.

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

<sup>3</sup>In reply Jesus declared, “**I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.**”

<sup>4</sup>“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

*(continued on the next page)*

<sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup>You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup>The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

<sup>9</sup>“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

<sup>10</sup>“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? <sup>11</sup>I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. <sup>12</sup>I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.