



SUNDAY, JULY 31–AUGUST 6

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTIONARY 18

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:1-5

A reading from Isaiah.

¹Hear, everyone who thirsts;
come to the waters;
and you who have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
²Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread
and your earnings for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.

³Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.

⁴See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵Now you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

Word of God, word of life. or The word of the Lord.

PSALMODY: Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

SECOND READING: Romans 9:1-5

A reading from Romans.

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying;
my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—
²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

FIRST READING *Isaiah = eye-ZAY-uh*

This passage reaffirms God's commitment to the people of Israel, the very covenant God struck with David. These are words of promise. The reader will help the assembly to understand them by making them sound promising.

SECOND READING

The author's "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" set the tone for this reading. We hear Paul's agony that the Israelites have not embraced the righteousness that is rightfully theirs through faith in Christ Jesus. The reader would do well to read the remainder of the ninth chapter of Romans, to

³For I could wish that I myself were accursed
and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own brothers and sisters,
my own flesh and blood.

⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory,
the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises;

⁵to them belong the patriarchs, and from them,
according to the flesh, comes the Christ, who is over all,
God blessed forever. Amen.

Word of God, word of life. or The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 14:13-21

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

¹³Now when Jesus heard [†]about the beheading of John the Baptist,
he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself.
But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd,
and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said,
“This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late;
send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages
and buy food for themselves.”

¹⁶Jesus said to them, “They need not go away;
you give them something to eat.”

¹⁷They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.”

¹⁸And he said, “Bring them here to me.”

¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish,
he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves
and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

²⁰And all ate and were filled,
and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.

²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men,
besides women and children.

The gospel of the Lord.

which this paragraph is the introduction. Clearly the author’s anguish is real when he says, “I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own brothers and sisters, my own flesh and blood.” Help the assembly sense Paul’s pain.

GOSPEL

Even when sorrowful and weary, Jesus has compassion for the great crowd and heals and feeds them. Establish that weariness and deep grief in the first sentence. Infuse the sound of compassion into his dialogue with the disciples. Verses 20-21 demand a tone of wonder.