



SUNDAY, AUGUST 14–20

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTIONARY 20

FIRST READING: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

A reading from Isaiah.

¹Thus says the LORD:

Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come
and my deliverance be revealed.

⁶And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath and do not profane it
and hold fast my covenant—

⁷these I will bring to my holy mountain
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar,
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

⁸Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel:
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.

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

PSALMODY: Psalm 67

FIRST READING *Isaiah = eye-ZAY-uh*

The reading calls for the sound of the authoritative yet inviting voice of God. It illustrates the wideness of God's mercy and God's desire to gather "the outcasts of Israel" and others. The sound we are striving for is a combination of strength and warmth.

SECOND READING: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

A reading from Romans.

「Paul writes:」

¹I ask, then, has God rejected his people?

By no means! I myself am an Israelite,
a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

^{2a}God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

³⁰Just as you were once disobedient to God
but have now received mercy because of their disobedience,

³¹so also they have now been disobedient in order that,
by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy.

³²For God has imprisoned all in disobedience
so that he may be merciful to all.

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

SECOND READING

This brief text is packed with some heavy theological thinking. The apostle's point is that God has not forsaken the Jews (God's promises are "irrevocable") but has used their disobedience to open God's promises to the gentiles even as God will use gentile disobedience (and God's mercy to the gentiles) to illustrate God's mercy to the Jews. To read this one well the lector must have this little argument set clearly in mind before sharing it with others.

GOSPEL: Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

[¹⁰「Jesus」 called the crowd to him and said to them,

“Listen and understand:

¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person,
but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.”

¹²Then the disciples approached and said to him,

“Do you know that the Pharisees took offense
when they heard what you said?”

¹³He answered,

“Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.

¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind.

And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.”

¹⁵But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.”

¹⁶Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding?

¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach
and goes out into the sewer?

¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart,
and this is what defiles.

¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery,
sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

²⁰These are what defile a person,
but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”]

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out
and started shouting,

“Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David;
my daughter is tormented by a demon.”

²³But he did not answer her at all.

And his disciples came and urged him, saying,

“Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.”

²⁴He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.”

²⁶He answered,

“It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

²⁷She said, “Yes, Lord,

yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

²⁸Then Jesus answered her,

“Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.”

And her daughter was healed from that moment.

The gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL *Sidon = SY-dun Canaanite = KAY-nuh-nyt*

In either its longer or abbreviated form, this gospel’s principal challenge is to make the dialogue believable. It requires some thoughtful decisions well ahead of time about the tone of voice our Lord employs in several different situations. This is no small challenge.