



SUNDAY, AUGUST 21–27

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTIONARY 21

FIRST READING: Isaiah 51:1-6

A reading from Isaiah.

¹Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek the LORD.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn
and to the quarry from which you were dug.

²Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah, who bore you,
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.

³For the LORD will comfort Zion;
he will comfort all her waste places
and will make her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the LORD;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁴Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation,
for a teaching will go out from me
and my justice for a light to the peoples.

⁵I will bring near my deliverance swiftly;
my salvation has gone out,
and my arms will rule the peoples;
the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope.

⁶Lift up your eyes to the heavens
and look at the earth beneath,
for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and those who live on it will die like gnats,
but my salvation will be forever,
and my deliverance will never be ended.

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

FIRST READING *Isaiah = eye-ZAY-uh*

Look, listen, and learn! These three words summarize the hopeful prophecy of promise for God's people. Listen up, says almighty God, and learn of my power and my love. The reading calls for extraordinary energy and enthusiasm. Appreciate and help the assembly to see the marvelous images the words create.

PSALMODY: Psalm 138

SECOND READING: Romans 12:1-8

A reading from Romans.

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters,
on the basis of God's mercy,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God,
which is your reasonable act of worship.

²Do not be conformed to this age,
but be transformed by the renewing of the mind,
so that you may discern what is the will of God—
what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you
not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think
but to think with sober judgment,
each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

⁴For as in one body we have many members
and not all the members have the same function,
⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ,
and individually we are members one of another.

⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us:
prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering;
the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the encourager, in encouragement;
the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence;
the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

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

SECOND READING *prophecy = PROF-uh-see*

One might have the best chance of helping the assembly appreciate the variety of truths in the text by allowing each sentence (verses 1, 2, 3, 4-5, and 6-8) to stand on its own. Pause—at each period. Do not hurry—there is a lot to learn here. Also note that in verse 6 the word *prophecy* is a noun. It is pronounced differently than the verb form, which is spelled with an "s."

GOSPEL: Matthew 16:13-20

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴And they said,
“Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah
and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

¹⁶Simon Peter answered,
“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷And Jesus answered him,
“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah!
For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven.

¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,
and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,
and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven,
and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

²⁰Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone
that he was the Messiah.

The gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL *Caesarea Philippi = sez-uh-REE-uh fil-IP-eye Jeremiah = jehr-uh-MY-uh
Hades = HAY-deez*

Visualize the scene in rehearsal before reading it for the assembly. In the sound of the reader's voice the assembly will see it as well. A significant pause after each disciple's suggestion ("John the Baptist," "Elijah," "Jeremiah," "one of the prophets") will provide a sense of answers being offered by different individuals.