

Reader's notes

*'IN THE SCRIPTURES,
BY THE SPIRIT,
MAY WE SEE THE SAVIOURS FACE,
HEAR HIS WORD AND
HEAD HIS CALLING,
KNOW HIS LOVE AND
GROW IN GRACE.'*

The Gospel

John 1:29-34

John the Baptist give Jesus two titles, and makes three other assertions about Jesus' importance.

It's time to begin another Sunday-by-Sunday journey with Jesus in his public ministry. Today's gospel, John 1:29-34 gives us John the Baptist passing the torch, if you will, to Jesus. John first calls Jesus "Lamb of God," then ascribes to Jesus a baptism more potent than his own, and finally names Jesus "Son of God."

First Reading,

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

Scholars have called this and three similar passages from this section of Isaiah (chapters 40-55) the Songs of the Suffering Servant. They're about a mysterious figure, who sometimes speaks in the first person, and whom God sometimes addresses.

Sometimes the Servant is described as a prophet, sometimes as one whose suffering brings about a benefit for the people. In the original author's mind, the servant was probably a figure for the people of Israel, or for a faithful remnant within the people. Today's is from the second servant song; we read a more complete version of it, Isaiah 49:1-6, on the feast of the birth of John the Baptist. The first servant song, Isaiah 42: 1-7, was our first reading last week, on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. On Passion Sunday, we proclaim the third, Isaiah 50:4-7, and on Good Friday, the fourth, Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

Your Proclamation: Note that the Lord speaks first ("You are my servant, ..."), then the Servant, and then the Lord again ("It is too little, ..."). Jacob and Israel are both names for the same people. Mark these changes with pauses and changes in tone of voice.

You/Isaiah are announcing a mission to audiences that may be indifferent or hostile. Indeed, you have to get your audience to see themselves as the Lord's Servant with you, a very tall order.

God wants that people brought back to himself, but

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings

<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/readings/?feature=sunday>

Notes: https://lectorprep.org/ordtime_02_yrA.html

that's not all: God furthermore wants to make the servant, that is the people, a beacon for other nations, that God's salvation may reach all the earth. This is the revolutionary part of the message, for most peoples still conceived their gods as local, territorial and tribal. A God whose care is universal was (and remains) a hard sell, needing courageous servants who can make the case convincingly.

Deliver it with a strong finish.

Second Reading,

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

This is the beginning of Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, and you should announce it as such, not just (another) "reading from..." Remember from school, the first three elements of a business letter: heading, inside address, and salutation. They're all here, but in sentence form, according to the ancient standard.

The heading or letterhead announces that this is from Paul and Sosthenes (SOS the knees) and that Paul is "called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God." That level of authority is important for what follows, which we'll read on future Sundays.

The inside address shows the letter is for all members of the church at Corinth. This was a bawdy seaport in cosmopolitan Greece. The vices of every seaport, plus the philosophical ferment of ancient Greece, are part of these peoples' lives, and give rise, in part, to the need for this letter. Right off the bat, Paul reminds them they're "sanctified and called to be holy" like all who call on the name of Jesus. **The salutation** is not just "Dear Corinthians," but a wish for their "grace and peace."

Your Proclamation: Pause between the elements as described above. Emphasize the word "apostle" in the first sentence. Pause before "to the church." And pause once more before "May our Father ..."

Next Readers Session: January 18th 11 am

18th January is the beginning of the Church Unity Week
26th January is **Word of God Sunday**

There will be a special lecture on Matthew on the evening of Thursday 30th January, I would recommend this to all Readers as worth attending.