

## Reader's notes

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

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## 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year A

### Readings

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

*The link to the readings is a temporary one, it will bring you to the correct readings **only** for the week leading up to the Sunday in question. (its a copyright thing)*

Notes: <https://www.tarsus.ie/page-72/page-96/>

### The Gospel

MT 5:38-48

Jesus, the new Moses preaching from the mount, continues to contrast the ways of his followers with the accepted ways of earlier peoples.

We've come to the point in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus strongly differentiates the ethical behaviour that he expects of his disciples from the conventional, from what we "have heard that it was said."

### First Reading,

Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

The passage is a call to a particular kind of holiness, "Be you holy as I, the Lord, am holy." as in

"Be you different from the crude, violent, rapacious, self-important, superstitious and unsanitary neighbouring tribes, as I, the Lord your God, am quite different from their so-called gods."

And how is the Lord unlike other gods? Precisely by overcoming the divine-human chasm that dominates pagan religion, and being God with the people: with them in their perilous journey, with them in the Law that can make their lives and their society excellent and humane. And the people are to be holy, that is unlike other peoples, by behaving as people who know their God chooses to be near them.

**Proclaiming It:** Think about how you'd like to hear a reader announce today's gospel, where Jesus distinguishes his new commands from what "you have heard," the dull, unchallenging, old-fashioned, obsolete ways of doing things. The Sermon on the Mount was not the first time God had announced new expectations and expressed disdain for old ways. This

passage from Leviticus recalls an earlier, similar revolution. Make it sound revolutionary. Make the Lord sound authoritative, for that solemn authority is all God has to use to be persuasive.

The passage is **short**, pause after announcing the reading and read with clear articulation, *rushing it will not allow the congregation to participate in the hearing fo the passage*

### Second Reading,

1 Corinthians 3:16-23

We're still in unruly Corinth and Paul's message is that the community in Christ should be different from the fractious, competitive groups around them because the Head, Christ, is holy, is different from whatever inspires those other rivalries. Let's not be like them. To be so is to be unworthy of Christ.

More immediately, Paul has been using imagery from the house-building trade. He says in verse 3:10 that he had laid the foundation, and others must respect that foundation, which is Christ. But they build upon the foundation with gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay or straw. That sounds descriptive of a variety of contributions to church community life.

The image then branches into another building-based metaphor, that the people are a temple. Paul is telling a boisterous community in a pagan seaport that they're a temple in whom lives the Spirit of God. So this sentence of the reading is more revolutionary than you might think.

Then Paul changes the subject back to an earlier one, and gives us some more on the differences between human powers and God's powers. He wants factions loyal to different Christian leaders in the history of the Corinth community to transfer those loyalties to the one Christ, so he minimises the powers and authority of Cephas, Apollos and himself.

**Proclaiming It:** Think of the reading as three paragraphs The first paragraph has two sentences. At the end of the second sentence, emphasise the last clause, "for the temple of God, is sacred, and you are that temple." Pause after saying that.

In the second paragraph make audible all the contrasts between wise and fools, wisdom and foolishness. Vary your tone of voice as you speak these words. Make Paul sound seriously concerned—his people were acting foolish, at their peril, and he earnestly wanted them to embrace wisdom. This was not trivial or routine.

Give the third paragraph the rhetorical flourish that its author clearly intended. Sound triumphal and conclusive.

*Next Sunday begins the Lenten cycle and as it is year A has a particularly rich Baptismal theme throughout*

**Next Readers Session: March 25<sup>th</sup> 11 am**