

# TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #119

READING I Proverbs 9:1-6

A reading from the Book of Proverbs

Wisdom has built her house,  
 she has set up her seven columns;  
 she has dressed her meat, mixed her wine,  
 yes, she has spread her table.  
 She has sent out her maidens; she calls  
 from the heights out over the city:  
 "Let whoever is simple turn in here";  
 to the one who lacks understanding, she says,  
 "Come, eat of my food,  
 and drink of the wine I have mixed!  
 Forsake foolishness that you may live;  
 advance in the way of understanding."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 (9a)

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

I will bless the LORD at all times;  
 his praise shall be ever in my mouth.  
 Let my soul glory in the LORD;  
 the lowly will hear me and be glad.  
 Glorify the LORD with me,  
 let us together extol his name.  
 I sought the LORD, and he answered me  
 and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him that you may be radiant  
 with joy,  
 and your faces may not blush with shame.  
 When the poor one called out, the  
 LORD heard,  
 and from all his distress he saved him.

An exhortatory reading. Help the assembly see the images you describe.

Good news, so smile with your voice, eyes, and face throughout.

Keep your energy up.

"Simple" is not an insult; it refers to those who still seek wisdom.

Maintain eye contact with the assembly and directly invite them, as if you wanted them to get up out of their seats and come forward.

For meditation and context:

TO KEEP IN MIND

Exhortatory texts make an urgent appeal to listeners. They may encourage, warn, or challenge, and often include a call to action. You must convey the urgency and passion behind the words.

READING I

The nine-chapter introduction to Proverbs concludes with Lady Wisdom's invitation to share her banquet. The seven columns of the house symbolize the perfection of her home—seven being emblematic of perfection. By design the book is composed of seven collections of proverbs, pointing to the completeness of her wisdom. The banquet offers the teaching of the sages, and the person who listens to Wisdom's teaching and eats at her table assimilates her wisdom. The follower of Wisdom will "advance in the way of understanding."

Wisdom's banquet prefigures the true Bread of Life that God gives, the body of the Word made flesh.

READING II

The new life received in Baptism is characterized by careful consideration, not foolishness. Our aim is to profit from the time God gives to make us holy, to live moderately, and to praise God. This reading summons us to conduct ourselves wisely and to praise God. Together they highlight the purposes for which the new community exists: praise of God's grace and walking in good works.

The warning "Watch carefully how you live" highlights the constant danger that the righteous face in this present age when "the days are evil."

While drunkenness and its resulting lack of control are common in lists of vices to avoid, the blindness or unconsciousness of a drunken humanity also serves as a metaphor for Christians looking forward to eternal life. The antithesis of being "drunk" is to be "filled with the Spirit." Praise and thanksgiving are the appropriate response to what God has accomplished in the life of

An exhortatory reading. Urge your assembly to live consistent with their identity as Christians filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians = ee-FEE-shuhn-z

Paul sets up contrasts between the foolish and the wise; be dismissive of the foolish behavior and let your energy rise as you describe the wise.

debauchery = dih-BAW-chuh-ree

Hear the joyful sounds in the scene Paul describes and let that come through in your proclamation.

Slow to the end, but keep your energy up.

#### TO KEEP IN MIND

You can't proclaim what you don't understand. Read the Scripture passage and its commentary in *Workbook*. Then read it from your Bible, including what comes before and after it so that you understand the context.

## READING II Ephesians 5:15–20

### A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

Watch **carefully** how you live,  
not as **foolish** persons but as **wise**,  
making the **most** of the opportunity,  
because the days are **evil**.

**Therefore**, do not continue in **ignorance**,  
but try to **understand** what is the will of the **LORD**.  
And do not get **drunk** on wine, in which lies **debauchery**,  
but be **filled** with the **Spirit**,  
addressing one another in **psalms** and **hymns** and  
**spiritual songs**,  
**singing** and **playing** to the **LORD** in your **hearts**,  
giving thanks **always** and for **everything**  
in the name of our **LORD Jesus Christ** to God the **Father**.

the believer, and "singing and playing" keeps our hearts focused on the Lord.

#### GOSPEL

This reading has some of the strongest statements from Jesus that can be found. How can we appreciate this tapestry of extraordinary sayings? John the Evangelist is instructing us about the value of the Eucharist. It is offered to us in two ways. The first is from the altar, the altar of the Word that became flesh (John 1:14); the second is from the altar as bread and wine transformed into the Body and Blood of the

Lamb. The reference to "the bread that came down from heaven" that our "ancestors" ate on the journey from slavery to freedom is eloquent. The manna nourishes us as we travel toward the Promised Land. In this reading Jesus offers the new manna to his community, the Bread of Life in the form of the Word of God. If we understand Jesus' discourse in terms of the Mass, our first communion consists in listening to the Word of God, who enters the ear of our interior life and nourishes us for life. But there is another element to our feast: the altar of sacrifice the Baptist referred to

when he named Jesus "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

This discourse of Jesus takes place during the Passover, after the multiplication of the five loaves. We may imagine that it is the Passover Lamb who speaks, or Jesus addressing us from the Cross. The Paschal Lamb invites our contemplation: If you do not share in the Paschal supper, "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man [the Lamb] and drink his blood, you do not have life within you." Apart from Holy Communion with Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection, we do not receive life, or