

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A narrative reading. We may be accustomed to hearing God's great works described in Scripture, but strive to return to a sense of wonder in this proclamation.

Baal-shalishah = BAY-uhl SHAHL-ih-shuh or
BAH-uhl SHAUL-ih shuh

Elisha = ee-LĪ-shuh

Slightly longer pause at this comma so as not to run these phrases together.

Incredulous.

Be careful not to sound angry. Elisha trusts completely in God.

With amazement.

For meditation and context:

TO KEEP IN MIND

In a narrative, find an emotion or point of view for each character, keeping in mind that these might change during the reading.

LECTIONARY #110

READING I 2 Kings 4:42-44

A reading from the second Book of Kings

A man came from Baal-shalishah bringing to **Elisha**, the man of **God**, twenty barley **loaves** made from the firstfruits, and fresh **grain** in the ear.

Elisha said, "**Give** it to the people to eat."

But his servant **objected**,

"How can I set this before a **hundred** people?"

Elisha **insisted**, "**Give** it to the people to eat.

For thus says the Lord,

'They shall **eat** and there shall be some left **over**.'

And when they had **eaten**, there **was** some left over, as the **LORD** had said.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18 (16)

R. The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

Let all your works give you thanks, O **LORD**,
and let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of
your kingdom
and speak of your might.

The eyes of all look hopefully to you,
and you give them their food in
due season;
you open your hand
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

The **LORD** is just in all his ways
and holy in all his works.
The **LORD** is near to all who call upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.

READING I Despite the obvious discrepancy between supply and demand, Elisha gives the order to share the bread as he pronounces the oracle from God. From meager provisions comes a great deal, so one hundred hungry men eat their fill and still do not consume all twenty barley loaves. Such theological stories about hunger in the Old Testament encourage solidarity among people, show God's care for his creatures, and give a foretaste of Jesus' multiplication of loaves.

READING II The author's exhortation often opens with the verb *parakaléo*, "I appeal" or "I beg you." After this entreaty comes a brief list of virtues, which then shifts to the main theme of the letter: the unity of the body of Christ. The exhortation to "live in a manner worthy of the call you have received" echoes the Jewish understanding of divine election (being chosen by God). Although Christians are no longer slaves of the Law, the conviction that election leads to a new life remains. The Jewish metaphor for daily conduct is "to walk." The Hebrew word *hal-*

akh means "walk," and hence, the Jewish legal term *halakah* refers to rules for conduct; this reflects how moral issues normally arise in a person's daily dealings as one walks through life. All of life is a response to the invitation to live for God.

Now the Apostle shifts to the specific focus of this section—unity. A "call" or vocation inevitably means cooperating with others, with all the difficulties, misunderstandings, hurt feelings, and irritation that entails. Paul gives the key to effective cooperation: humility and gentleness (very un-macho characteristics), patience and for-

An exhortatory reading composed of one long sentence; use the punctuation as a guide on where to pause.

Ephesians = ee-FEE-shuhnz

Sincerely encourage the assembly.

Smile as you relate these traits of the ideal community.

Pause at the end of this line.

Heighten each successive instance of that which is one, building intensity to the final phrase.

With increasing energy.

Slow slightly through the end of this phrase.

A narrative reading. What do each of the characters want and feel? Make your choices clear in your proclamation.

Galilee = GAL-ih-lee

Quickly, to convey the excitement of the crowd.

Don't gloss over this line. It connects the meal of Passover with the meal about to happen.

Although a "test," this should sound like a legitimate question.

bearance in love, enthusiasm to maintain the unity of the Spirit and "the bond of peace"—Greek *eirēnē*, the gift of the Spirit that goes beyond social interest and absence of strife. "Peace" refers to the salvation that comes from God. Unity is a gift arising from the shared experience of the one Spirit; believers do not create it but we can destroy it! God's peace functions as a bond when there is mutual respect.

Finally, Paul's confession reinforces this unity by recalling its triadic structure—one Spirit, one Lord, one God. By placing "one God" last and attaching to it

READING II Ephesians 4:1–6

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

I, a **prisoner** for the LORD,
urge you to live in a manner **worthy** of the call
 you have received,
 with all **humility** and **gentleness**, with **patience**,
bearing with one another through **love**,
striving to preserve the **unity** of the spirit through the bond
 of **peace**:
 one **body** and one **Spirit**,
 as you were also called to the one **hope** of your call;
 one **LORD**, one **faith**, one **baptism**;
 one **God** and **Father** of all,
 who is **over** all and **through** all and **in** all.

GOSPEL John 6:1–15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee.

A **large** crowd followed him,
 because they saw the **signs** he was performing on the **sick**.

Jesus went up on the **mountain**,
 and there he sat down with his **disciples**.

The Jewish feast of **Passover** was near.

When Jesus raised his **eyes**
 and saw that a large **crowd** was coming to him,
 he said to Philip,

"Where can we buy enough **food** for them to eat?"

He said this to **test** him,
 because he himself **knew** what he was going to do.

the "alls"—"the Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all"—the author reminds us that the foundation of Christian unity is God, both in his oneness and in his "allness" as creator. The confession of Christ as "one Lord" echoes the distinctively Jewish emphasis on God as one and reminds us that the principal strains on Christian unity at this time came from including Gentiles in Israel's privileged status. The "one Spirit" unifies the body, both as a shared experience and through the manifold workings of grace. The "call" is one, because it is the same for all believers,

without deference to rank or ability. The "one faith" recalls one of the earliest baptismal confessions: Jesus is Lord.

GOSPEL Jesus, the new Moses, now on a different "mountain" from Sinai, takes the initiative. The reference to "the one who is to come into the world" recalls Elijah, whose coming precedes that of the Messiah (Malachi 3:1, 23). In the present chapter the approach of the feast anticipates the final Passover, in which John replaces the words spoken over the bread and wine with the washing of the