

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

An exhortatory reading. Let the assembly see your delight and maintain that emotion throughout.

Start slowly, with quiet excitement, and build your intensity gradually.

Scoff at the worthlessness of power and wealth.

mire = muck

With real passion. comeliness = beauty

Pause at the end of this line.

Drop your intensity slightly, but don't lose the emotion. Slow to the end.

For meditation and context:

TO KEEP IN MIND

Pay attention to the pace of your reading. Varying the pace gives listeners clues to the meaning of the text. The most common problem for proclaimers new to the ministry is going too fast to be understood.

READING I

The model sage, Solomon, did not receive wisdom as a birthright. He requested it in his inaugural prayer as sovereign, desiring wisdom above all other goods: scepters and thrones, material wealth, health, and beauty, and even sunlight. Wisdom is the evidence of God's personal involvement in the created world. More than a blueprint, it is God's saving presence. Because Solomon requested wisdom over the customary perks of royal office, God added to this gift everything Solomon had not requested. In this we hear an echo of Jesus urging us to

LECTIONARY #143

READING I Wisdom 7:7-11

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

I prayed, and prudence was given me;
I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.
I preferred her to scepter and throne,
and deemed riches **nothing** in comparison with her,
nor did I liken any priceless gem to her,
because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand,
and before her, silver is to be accounted mire.
Beyond health and comeliness I loved her,
and I chose to have her rather than the light,
because the splendor of her never yields to sleep.
Yet all good things together came to me in her company,
and countless riches at her hands.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17 (14)

R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Teach us to number our days aright,
that we may gain wisdom of heart.
Return, O LORD! How long?
Have pity on your servants!

Fill us at daybreak with your kindness,
that we may shout for joy and gladness all
our days.

Make us glad, for the days when you
afflicted us,
for the years when we saw evil.

Let your work be seen by your servants
and your glory by their children;
and may the gracious care of the LORD our
God be ours;
prosper the work of our hands for us!
Prosper the work of our hands!

seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and all other good things will be given besides (see Matthew 6:33).

READING II

The reading from Hebrews is a continuation of the warning that the "word of God" (which is often used as a title for Jesus Christ and so "Word" is often in upper case) brings judgment as well as salvation: God's Word has been pronounced and cannot be ignored. The Hebrew language has a special idea about words: once pronounced, their effect makes things happen. A spoken

word contains within itself a power that does what it says.

God's word-in-action, heard and experienced in the Old Testament, is revealed in its fullness in the life and activity of Jesus, in whom God's Word became a living reality. It is "effective," demanding an active response from us; it is "penetrating" and so incisive that it divides the soul—the life principle—from the spirit—the reason and thought that looks beyond the horizon to God.

Is the author saying that the Word of God tests a person's earthly life and spiritual

A didactic reading. This text reminds us of the power of the Word we proclaim, and the reason we take care to proclaim it well.

Good news! Share eagerly, but take your time. Keep your voice up at the ends of these phrases.

Don't swallow "heart."

We need not fear; God knows us deeply.

A narrative reading. Identify and express an emotion for each of the characters; remember, one character may have many emotions in the course of the narrative.

Lively, with the enthusiasm of the man.

Keep your pace up through these commandments; as Jesus says, we know them already.

Slow down, and lower your voice on Jesus' response to reflect the intimacy of the exchange.

existence? The "reflections and thoughts of the heart" are the intellect, conscience, and subconscious. Even our moral and intellectual life is submitted to the scrutiny of the Word. Humans judge according to external conduct and appearances, but God scrutinizes the interior life. In these two verses the theologian formulates a pun with the repetition of specific words: we are confronted with the Word (Greek, *logos*), open to the eyes of him (the *logos*) "to whom we must render an account" (*logos*). We must give a *logos* to him who is the *Logos*.

READING II Hebrews 4:12–13

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brothers and sisters:

Indeed the word of God is **living and effective,**

sharper than any two-edged sword,

penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow,
and able to discern **reflections and thoughts** of the heart.

No creature is concealed from him,

but everything is **naked and exposed** to the eyes of him
to whom we must render an account.

GOSPEL Mark 10:17–30

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

[As Jesus was setting out on a **journey**, a man **ran up,**
knelt down before him, and **asked him,**
"Good **teacher**, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me **good?**

No one is good but God alone.

You **know** the commandments: *You shall not kill;*

*you shall not commit **adultery**;*

*you shall not **steal**;*

*you shall not bear **false witness**;*

*you shall not **defraud**;*

*honor your **father and your mother**."*

He replied and said to him,

"Teacher, **all** of these I have observed from my youth."

Jesus, **looking at him, loved him** and said to him,

"You are lacking in **one thing**.

Go, sell what you have, and give to the **poor**

and you will have **treasure in heaven**; then come, **follow me**."

GOSPEL This story of the wealthy aspirant to eternal life is expanded by sayings about wealth and the difficulty of entering the Kingdom, and then followed by promises about the rewards due to disciples. The inquirer asks about the entrance requirements to eternal life. Jesus' initial reply cites the second half of the Decalogue (replacing "do not covet" with "do not defraud"), focusing on those commandments that concern human relationships. In the Old Testament, wealth and material goods were considered a sign of God's favor. Jesus' reply astonishes the dis-

ciples because it appears to contradict the customary principle. Since wealth, power, and merit generated false security, Jesus rejects them. Achieving salvation is beyond human competence and depends solely on the goodness of God, who offers it as a gift. The inquirer's reply indicates that he agrees that obedience to the letter of the Law is not enough, but his further question—what more must I do?—suggests that he still thinks in terms of achievement.

Jesus' response indicates that no such measuring is appropriate. Discipleship demands absolute attention. The obstacle