

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #149

READING I Jeremiah 31:7-9

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

Thus says the Lord:

Shout with joy for Jacob,
exult at the head of the nations;
 proclaim your **praise** and say:
 The LORD has **delivered** his people,
 the **remnant** of Israel.

Behold, I will bring them **back**
 from the land of the north;
 I will **gather** them from the **ends** of the world,
 with the blind and the lame in their midst,
 the mothers and those with child;
 they shall **return** as an **immense throng**.
 They departed in **tears**,
 but I will **console** them and **guide** them;
 I will lead them to brooks of **water**,
 on a level road, so that **none** shall stumble.
 For I am a **father** to Israel,
 Ephraim is my **first-born**.

An exhortatory reading. How do you feel knowing how much God cares for us? Bring that emotion to the reading.

Jeremiah = jayr-uh-Mĭ-uh

Jubilantly. This is great news! Smile with your voice, eyes, and face through this opening section.

Pause at the end of this line.

God speaks. Lower your volume (but not your energy) and express with tenderness and care.

This gathering requires a gentle touch.

Lift your eyes and see this throng spread before you.

Be eager to show your love.

Slight pause at the end of this line.

With joy and firm conviction.

Ephraim = EE-fray-im or EF-fr*m

READING I Jeremiah describes the future, hoped-for trip home from exile and the people's song: "The LORD has delivered his people, the remnant of Israel." This liturgical refrain provides hope for the community in exile, who await a new exodus, a triumphant return home through the mountainous, desert terrain. Then the prophet announces the divine plan. God will bring them back from where they had been exiled, the land of the north. He will gather the new Israel and lead them by streams of water on pleasant paths, water being a sign of God's attentive love.

Among the companions are the most vulnerable and disabled of the population, the blind, lame, pregnant, and those about to give birth. This procession embodies the whole community, humbled and hurt yet bringing forth new life. God will accompany them on their return as the father of Ephraim, his firstborn, who symbolizes the faithless generation of exiles who have repented and returned.

READING II The Letter to the Hebrews works out the doctrine of the high priesthood of Jesus Christ. We find

three essential qualifications of the priesthood described here. (1) A priest, the link between God and humans, was appointed on behalf of humans to deal with the things concerning God. The priest's special function was to offer sacrifice for the people's sins. Sin disturbs the friendship between humans and God and creates a barrier between them. The sacrifice was meant to restore that relationship, and could atone for sins of ignorance. Sacrifice could not atone for the deliberate sin, however. Ignorance is pardonable; presumption is not. Ignorance includes sins committed

For meditation and context:

TO KEEP IN MIND

A didactic reading is usually given out of love for the community. Make sure that love is evident in your proclamation.

A didactic reading. Not a dry, academic treatise, but a teaching about God's care for both the high priest and the people the priest serves.

Don't be dismissive of the high priest. He is recognized as imperfect but still valuable to the community.

Convey the patient understanding of the high priest.

Pause at the end of this line.

With affection.

Show your satisfaction with this great high priest; slow to the end.

Melchizedek = mel-KEEZ-uh-dek

when a person is swept away by an impulse of anger or passion or mastered by some temptation. The sin of presumption is calculated disobedience of God for which a person is not sorry. The priest could open the way for the sinner to return to God—if the sinner wanted to come back.

(2) The priest was one with humans, toward whom he lived with sympathy. The priest was identified with humans to such an extent that he offered sacrifice for his own sin before offering it for the sins of others. In connection with this the author used a wonderful word, *metriopathein*,

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 (3)

R. The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,
we were like men dreaming.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with rejoicing.

Then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things
for them."

The LORD has done great things for us;
we are glad indeed.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the torrents in the southern desert.
Those that sow in tears
shall reap rejoicing.

Although they go forth weeping,
carrying the seed to be sown,
they shall come back rejoicing,
carrying their sheaves.

READING II Hebrews 5:1-6

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brothers and sisters:

Every high priest is taken from among **men**
and made their representative before God,
to offer **gifts and sacrifices for sins**.

He is able to deal **patiently with the ignorant and erring**,
for he **himself** is beset by **weakness**
and so, for this reason, must make sin offerings for himself
as well as for the people.

No one takes this honor upon **himself**
but only when **called by God**,
just as Aaron was.

In the **same way**,
it was not Christ who glorified **himself** in becoming
high priest,
but rather the one who said to him:

You are my son:

this day I have begotten you;

just as he says in **another place**:

You are a priest forever

according to the order of Melchizedek.

"deal patiently," a term that refers to the ability to sympathize. The Greeks understood *metriopatheia* (the noun) as the mean between excessive grief and indifference. It refers to balanced relations among persons, the ability to bear with them without getting irritated, to not lose one's temper when people are slow or foolish and will not learn but rather do the same thing over and over again. Dealing gently or patiently with others does not condone their faults, nor does it give way to anger with them, but through the patience and

sympathy this virtue implies, it directs persons back to the right way.

(3) A third essential qualification of a priest is that no person appoint himself to the priesthood; his appointment to God's ministry among humans is neither a job nor a career but a calling. A person is able to look at the larger picture and say, "God chose me and gave me this service to offer." Hebrews shows how Jesus fulfills the conditions of the priesthood.