

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

An exhortatory reading. Moses is sharing good news with the people. Make sure it sounds that way.

Deuteronomy = do-ter-AHN-uh-mee

Start boldly and with vigor!

statutes = STACH-oots

Emphasize the rewards of observing the Law: life, land, wisdom, and the closeness of God.

No pause at this comma or the next.

Moses adds his personal advice, like a father to his children.

Be impressed!

Show your pleasure at the justness of God's Law.

LECTIONARY #125

READING I Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

Moses said to the people:

"Now, Israel, hear the statutes and decrees which I am **teaching** you to observe, that you may **live**, and may enter in and take **possession** of the land

which the **Lord**, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

In your observance of the commandments of the **LORD**, your God,

which I **enjoin** upon you,

you shall not **add** to what I command you nor **subtract** from it.

Observe them **carefully**,

for **thus** will you give evidence

of your **wisdom** and **intelligence** to the nations,

who will hear of all these statutes and say,

'This great nation is **truly** a **wise** and **intelligent** people.'

For what great nation is there

that has gods so **close** to it as the **LORD**, our God, is to **us** whenever we call upon him?

Or what great nation has **statutes** and **decrees**

that are as **just** as this whole law

which I am setting before you today?"

READING I

After recalling the desert sojourn from Sinai-Horeb, when God's providence was manifest (the first chapters of Deuteronomy), the author emphasizes the privilege of the Hebrew people, chosen by God from among all peoples to enter into an unprecedented friendship. This passage is part of the prologue, in which the people are urged to fulfill the Law, the history and details of which follow. The main argument for God's might and goodness is his presence among his people. Israel's life, configured by fulfillment of the Law, will be the most eloquent

teaching for the other peoples. The Law, with its commandments, customs, and statutes, was understood as the way of life indicated by God for his people. Their life and experience was God's plan for salvation. If Israel will comply with the Law she will receive her inheritance, understood as peaceful life in the land.

READING II

The "Father of lights" designates God as creator of the stars and, in keeping with the symbolism of light, the source of everything good. Christians, engendered by God through

"the word of truth," the Gospel, belong to God as his "first-fruits." The author specifies that it is not enough to hear the truth; one must listen and put it into practice. The Christian has been chosen out of the "world"—a term that here takes on pejorative overtones—to belong to the light. God's action, his Word, has done this. This Word-in-action inspires the Christian from Baptism onwards. She or he submits to this Word and work of God, putting it into practice rather than just hearing it. True devotion, fulfilling one's duty to God, is best

For meditation and context:

TO KEEP IN MIND

Pause in order to break up separate thoughts, set apart significant statements, or indicate major shifts. Never pause in the middle of a single thought. Your primary guide for pauses is punctuation.

A didactic reading. When you proclaim, you're giving a gift to the assembly. Let your generosity show.

Take this slowly.

Articulate this complex sentence carefully; pause briefly after "truth."

Urge your assembly to welcome this message.

This is why we proclaim with the intent to get our listeners to respond!

A simple summary of our obligations as Christians.

expressed in the care of those in need and opposition to the forces of evil.

GOSPEL

Opposite the Pharisees' narrow and legalistic concern about external purification, worship, and observance of the commandments, Jesus emphasizes the moral intent of the Law, going beyond its literal interpretation. The teaching about contamination coming from within cancels the laws about clean and unclean food and opens the way for unity between Jew and Gentile in the Kingdom of God. Mark signals this shift by having Jesus

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 15:2-3, 3-4, 4-5 (1a)

R. The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Whoever walks blamelessly and does justice; who thinks the truth in his heart and slanders not with his tongue.	Who lends not his money at usury and accepts no bribe against the innocent. Whoever does these things shall never be disturbed.
Who harms not his fellow man, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor; by whom the reprobate is despised, while he honors those who fear the LORD.	

READING II James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27

A reading from the Letter of Saint James

Dearest **brothers and sisters:**

All **good giving** and every perfect **gift** is from **above**,
coming down from the Father of **lights**,
with whom there is no alteration or shadow caused by **change**.
He willed to give us **birth** by the word of **truth**
that we may be a kind of **firstfruits** of his creatures.

Humbly **welcome** the word that has been planted in you
and is able to save your **souls**.

Be **doers** of the word and not **hearers** only, **deluding** yourselves.

Religion that is **pure and undefiled** before God and the Father
is **this:**

to care for **orphans** and **widows** in their **affliction**
and to keep oneself **unstained** by the world.

leave Galilee for Gentile territory in the following episodes of the Gospel.

The Law prescribed certain regulations for cultivating the moral purity necessary to approach God, and the tradition amplified and applied these laws and customs to other matters, like eating. External purity was considered the proof of integrity. The Jerusalem scribes criticize the disciples for not washing their hands properly before eating. Hand washing when returning from the town or market, as well as washing cups, jugs, and kettles, was to cleanse persons and everyday objects from

any accidental legal impurity. The intent is good, but the gesture has meaning only insofar as it expresses the cleansing of the person's interior life. Jesus stresses the importance of purity of heart when he says "from within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts," pointing to the subconscious that eludes all reason and restriction. Jesus prefers to associate with an amiable, if somewhat untidy, group rather than a clan of critics with clean hands. The scribes' overemphasis on legalism was choking the true sense of friendship with God. Jesus cites Isaiah, "This