

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A narrative reading. Who is "in" and who is "out" is a source of division even today. Help your assembly put aside such divisions; keep that intention uppermost in your mind as you proclaim.

Keep the story moving.

prophesied = PROF-uh-sīd
Pause at the end of this line.

Eldad = EL-dad; Medad = MEE-dad

With amazement.

Quickly and with energy. Keep the whole sentence together, pausing briefly at commas.

Indignantly.

Heighten your energy through to the end.
Take a slightly longer pause before "The Word of the Lord."

LECTIONARY #137

READING I Numbers 11:25-29

A reading from the Book of Numbers

The LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses.
Taking some of the **spirit** that was on Moses,
the LORD bestowed it on the seventy **elders**;
and as the spirit came to rest on them, they **prophesied**.

Now **two** men, one named Eldad and the other Medad,
were not in the gathering but had been left in the **camp**.
They **too** had been on the list, but had not gone out to the **tent**;
yet the spirit came to rest on them **also**,
and they **prophesied** in the camp.

So, when a young man quickly told Moses,
"Eldad and Medad are **prophesying** in the camp,"
Joshua, son of Nun, who from his youth had been
Moses' aide, said,
"Moses, my LORD, **stop** them."

But Moses answered him,
"Are you jealous for **my** sake?
Would that **all** the people of the LORD were **prophets**!
Would that the LORD might bestow his **spirit** on them **all**!"

READING I

The sterling career of Joshua was tarnished by the event narrated in this reading. Seventy elders in Israel had received the spirit of God to prophesy. Two, Eldad and Medad, were absent with the group when the others received the spirit's outpouring, but they were found prophesying in another place. When this was reported, Joshua, who from his youth had been Moses' right-hand man, told his master, "Stop them." What was the motive for the objection? Was it an issue of control, or perhaps a sense of supposed principles of orthodoxy

or group solidarity? Whatever the motive, Joshua objected to someone outside the parameters of the group receiving and manifesting the Spirit of God.

READING II

Continuing with the theme of the transitory nature of life, the author of the Letter of James stresses the impending ruin of the godless. The cries of the victims of people who gloat about their wealth and status have reached to heaven and judgment is imminent. The deterioration of costly garments and the corrosion of silver and gold symbolize the

worthlessness of wealth and foreshadow the destruction of the possessors. The author does not denounce any specific crime, but he warns against the unfair distribution of goods in society and the harsh treatment of the poor. In a prophetic tone James reproaches the pride, vanity, and avarice of the wealthy and their thoughtless pleasures. He warns them of impending judgment. The obligation to eliminate injustices is a Church doctrine; those who have wealth in abundance are to use it in service of humanity.

For meditation and context:

TO KEEP IN MIND

Proclamation cannot be effective unless it is expressive. As you prepare your proclamation, make choices about emotions. Some choices are already evident in the text.

An exhortatory reading. It may be uncomfortable to proclaim this with all the fury and vitriol it requires, but don't hold back, or James' words become meaningless.

Start slowly but strongly; the assembly will not expect this kind of diatribe. Keep your energy up throughout.

Make these "valuable" things sound disgusting.

Lower your volume.

Irony.

Begin to quicken your pace through this section.

Show your contempt for this way of life.

Pause.

A surprising ending; proclaim slowly and with meekness and humility.

GOSPEL

The event narrated in today's Gospel echoes that in the First Reading. The moral of the story denounces factionalism or discrimination in community. Just as faith is a gift and not an achievement (as in 9:24), so what matters is being true to the Gospel, and the exorcist plies his craft in Jesus' name. When John approached Jesus his complaint implied that Jesus should stop the maverick exorcist. We have no idea what motivated John on that occasion, but, given his later performance in company with his brother James, we may deduce the motive.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM, Psalm 19:8, 10, 12–13, 14 (9a)

R. The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart.

The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul;
the decree of the LORD is trustworthy,
giving wisdom to the simple.

The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true,
all of them just.

Though your servant is careful of them,
very diligent in keeping them,
yet who can detect failings?
Cleanse me from my unknown faults!

From wanton sin especially, restrain
your servant;
let it not rule over me.
Then shall I be blameless and innocent
of serious sin.

READING II James 5:1–6

A reading from the Letter of Saint James

**Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your
impending miseries.**

Your wealth has **rotted** away, your clothes have become
moth-eaten,
your gold and silver have **corroded**,
and that corrosion will be a **testimony** against you;
it will **devour** your flesh like a **fire**.

You have stored up **treasure** for the last days.

Behold, the wages you **withheld** from the workers
who harvested your fields are **crying** aloud;
and the **cries** of the harvesters
have reached the **ears** of the LORD of hosts.

You have lived on earth in **luxury** and **pleasure**;
you have **fattened** your hearts for the day of **slaughter**.

You have **condemned**;
you have **murdered** the righteous one;
he offers you no **resistance**.

On that same journey to the Cross Jesus would announce for a third time that he was to suffer, die, and rise (10:33–34). Then John would confess the aspirations of his heart, "that in your glory we may sit one at your right hand and the other at the your left" (10:38). It was only at the Crucifixion, that John realized the irony of his request. He who wanted to be enthroned on the right hand of Jesus, beheld what enthronement with Jesus would entail. Then Jesus' words must have made sense: "Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your

servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all" (10:43–44).

Perhaps in his youthful enthusiasm John wanted to limit the circle of intimacy around Jesus. Presuming to act as Jesus' deputy, John would have excluded the exorcist who used Jesus' name. But Jesus said, "whoever is not against us is for us." And he added what must have stabbed quite deep in John's memory, "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off." Was John stunned by the accurate aim of Jesus, who insinuated that for the health of his body, the Church, it might be suitable for John,