

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #147

READING I Exodus 17:8–13

A reading from the Book of Exodus

In those days, **Amalek** came and waged war against Israel.

Moses, therefore, said to **Joshua**,

“Pick out certain **men**,
and **tomorrow** go out and **engage Amalek** in battle.

I will be standing on top of the **hill**
with the **staff of God** in my **hand**.”

So **Joshua** did as **Moses** told him:

he **engaged Amalek** in battle
after **Moses** had **climbed** to the top of the hill
with **Aaron** and **Hur**.

As long as **Moses** kept his **hands raised up**,

Israel had the **better** of the fight,
but when he let his **hands rest**,
Amalek had the **better** of the fight.

Moses’ hands, however, grew **tired**;
so they put a **rock** in **place** for him to **sit** on.

Meanwhile Aaron and **Hur** supported his **hands**,
one on **one** side and **one** on the **other**,
so that his **hands** remained **steady** till **sunset**.

And **Joshua** mowed down **Amalek** and his **people**
with the **edge** of the **sword**.

Amalek = AM-uh-lek

Moses takes decisive action to rebuff
Amalek’s attack. He is determined and strong.

His “staff” represents God’s powerful
presence.

Your sober tone announces the beginning of
battle.

Aaron = AYR-uhn

Hur = her

A shift in tone can signal the differing impact
that the upraised and resting hands had on
the battle.

Speak with urgency: they aren’t simply making
him comfortable but ensuring Israel’s victory!

Connect the “steady” hands with the
consequence that follows. This is God’s
victory: speak with gratitude, not disdain.

READING I

While the Israelites are journeying in the desert, the nomadic, marauding Amalekites wage war against them. According to Moses (Deuteronomy 25:18), Amalek had no fear of God as he harassed the weak and weary people, and cut off from the rear all those who lagged behind. The details in today’s account focus neither on Amalek nor the weary Israelites, but on Moses, supported by Aaron and Hur, while Joshua engages Amalek in battle.

Moses’ action of holding his staff in upraised hands as he stands on top of the

hill has several possible meanings. The staff may be a sign of God’s power as it was at the parting of the Red Sea; the raised staff may also be a means of directing the battle or a sign of victory. Whatever the symbolism, the Israelites have the better of the fight as long as Moses’ hands are raised. With his tiring hands supported by his brother, Aaron, and Hur, the son of Caleb, Moses is able to keep his hands steady until sunset. The victory over Amalek is then complete.

Although there is no mention of the God of Israel in this account, the military

success of Joshua, the power of Moses’ upraised staff, and the support of Aaron and Hur are understood in the context of God’s abiding presence and power. God is the one who is victorious over the Amalekites. In the verse immediately following today’s reading, the Lord tells Moses, “I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens.” As the Israelites continue on their way through the desert, the Lord God will make the journey with them, always protecting and guiding them.

For meditation and context:

Beloved = bee-LUHV-uhd

This is more an earnest plea than an instruction.

Speak confidently of the reliability of Scripture.

This is a classic and bold declaration!

Conjure different images as you speak the words “teaching . . . refutation” to help you distinguish one from another.

Take a breath before starting this section and speak with solemn authority.

Use the imperatives to boldly invite your assembly to take on these important tasks. Within it are hearts that need to be convinced, reprimanded, or encouraged. Your heartfelt proclamation can help open their hearts to instruction.

READING II As Paul exhorts Timothy to remain faithful to what he has learned and believed, he writes of two sources of their common belief: Sacred Scripture and Christ Jesus. The Scriptures in which both Paul and Timothy believe conveyed the Jewish traditions through accounts of God’s actions of creating and redeeming, of making covenant, and remaining a powerful though unseen presence. There are stories of the ancestors and of God’s people throughout history, accounts of how people are to live in right relationship with the Lord, and writings as

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 121:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8 (see 2)

R. Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

I lift up my eyes toward the mountains;
whence shall help come to me?

My help is from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

May he not suffer your foot to slip;
may he slumber not who guards you:
indeed he neither slumbers nor sleeps,
the guardian of Israel.

The LORD is your guardian; the LORD is
your shade;

he is beside you at your right hand.
The sun shall not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

The LORD will guard you from all evil;
he will guard your life.

The LORD will guard your coming and
your going,
both now and forever.

READING II 2 Timothy 3:14—4:2

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy

Beloved:

Remain **faithful** to what you have **learned** and **believed**,
because you **know** from **whom** you **learned** it,
and that from **infancy** you have known the **sacred Scriptures**,
which are **capable** of giving you **wisdom** for **salvation**
through **faith** in **Christ Jesus**.

All Scripture is **inspired** by **God**

and is **useful** for **teaching**, for **refutation**, for **correction**,
and for **training** in **righteousness**,
so that **one** who **belongs** to **God** may be **competent**,
equipped for every good work.

I charge you in the presence of **God** and of **Christ Jesus**,
who will **judge** the **living** and the **dead**,
and by his **appearing** and his **kingly power**:

proclaim the **word**;
be **persistent** whether it is **convenient** or **inconvenient**;
convince, **reprimand**, **encourage** through **all patience**
and **teaching**.

diverse as genealogies, detailed regulations, and poetic prayers. Through all of these writings, inspired by God, the Jews learned and passed on their identity from generation to generation.

Faith in Christ Jesus opened a new way of interpreting these ancient texts. Paul was Timothy’s teacher in expounding how Jesus brought to fulfillment the hopes and promises of their tradition. Rather than abandoning their tradition, Jews like Paul and Timothy found in them an essential means of handing on their faith in the Christ, the promised Anointed One.

Paul charges Timothy to carry on the ministry of proclaiming the Word. When Paul urges Timothy to be persistent, whether it is convenient or inconvenient, he could well be referring to his own ministry of the word. For Paul it was more than a simple inconvenience: his fidelity in proclaiming his faith in Jesus resulted in hardships of every kind, including imprisonment. The Lord who was ever present in the past will remain present as Timothy hands on his faith to a new generation.