

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #141

READING I Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Habakkuk

**How long, O LORD? I cry for help
but you do not listen!**

I cry out to you, "**Violence!**"
but you do **not intervene.**

Why do you let me see **ruin;**
why must I look at **misery?**

Destruction and violence are before me;
there is **strife, and clamorous discord.**

Then the LORD answered me and said:

Write down the vision clearly upon the **tablets,**
so that one can **read it readily.**

For the **vision still has its time,**
presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint;
if it delays, wait for it,
it will surely come, it will not be late.

The rash one has no integrity;
but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.

Habakkuk = huh-BAK-kuhk or HAB-uh-kuhk

Are these the words of a single intercessor or of several praying about different sets of circumstances?

Fix a concrete situation of desperate need in your mind to lend passion and energy to these concerns.

Pause to allow time to transition to the more solemn tone of this section where the prophet quotes God.

This is a promise that faith will not be disappointed.

See with the eyes of faith, not those of the body!

Faith is always the mark of those who find favor with God and who can endure without losing heart.

READING I The first two chapters of Habakkuk consist of a dialogue between Habakkuk and the Lord. In today's reading, Habakkuk accuses God of not listening to his cry for help and not intervening in the face of violence. The prophet sees ruin, misery, and destruction, realities repeated so often in Israel's history that they could refer to almost any period. Even readers today can identify with the situations that Habakkuk laments.

In verses omitted from the lectionary, God responds to Habakkuk's complaint. With words that would seem to increase

the prophet's dismay, God describes the power and violence that Israel endures. After God's part of the dialogue, the prophet again speaks, not surprisingly, with another complaint. He says that God has made the people like fish of the sea, like creeping things without a ruler, suggesting that God has reversed the order of things established in creation. Habakkuk is keeping watch to see what answer God will give to his complaint.

We hear the divine response in the second part of today's reading. God offers a vision that the prophet is to write down,

so that it can be read. The fulfillment of this vision is certain and will not disappoint, even though it will come in its own time. The final verse presents two kinds of people who await the vision's arrival. One is rash, proud, or "puffed up," having no integrity. In contrast, the just person has faith. That person, while waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled, remains faithful and steadfast, confident in God's promise, no matter the circumstances or delay.

READING I Paul's two letters to Timothy are referred to as

For meditation and context:

TO KEEP IN MIND

Pace: The rate at which you read is influenced by the size of your church, the size of the congregation, and the complexity of the text. As each increases, rate decreases.

Beloved = bee-LUHV-uhd

The salutation is tender but the message is strong and challenging.

Set afire what is already within you—that you received in Holy Orders! “Power,” “love,” and “self-control” are three *distinct* qualities. Differentiate them.

These words comprise a spiritual pep-talk from someone whose own life circumstances are dark and painful.

Recall the suffering you’ve endured in life that could embolden you to invite others to not fear suffering.

Even today, millions suffer daily for the faith. How might they encourage others to safeguard it?

“pastoral epistles” because they give guidance to Timothy as a pastor, or shepherd, of the church. Paul is Timothy’s own pastor, giving him guidance, encouragement, warnings, and personal example, the same characteristics that Timothy himself is to offer to the Church. Writing from prison, Paul urges Timothy to exhibit courage and to accept hardship and the other challenges associated with being a pastor, always relying on the gift of God that Timothy received through the laying on of hands. This ancient custom is an initiation rite into office and is a sign of the transmis-

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9 (8)

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with
thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who
made us.

For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds, the
flock he guides.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah in the desert,
where your fathers tempted me;
they tested me though they had seen
my works.”

READING II 2 Timothy 1:6–8, 13–14

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy

Beloved:

I remind you to stir into flame

**the gift of God that you have through the imposition
of my hands.**

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice

but rather of power and love and self-control.

So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord,

nor of me, a prisoner for his sake;

but bear your share of hardship for the gospel

with the strength that comes from God.

**Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me,
in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.**

**Guard this rich trust with the help of the Holy Spirit
that dwells within us.**

sion of authority, such as Moses conferring authority to Joshua (Numbers 27:18–23), and the Apostles to the seven reputable men (Acts 6:6). The laying on of hands gave Timothy a participation in the same mission Paul exercised, the mission of being a shepherd for the nascent Church.

Writing from prison, Paul reminds Timothy that God did not give them a spirit of cowardice, and warns him not to be ashamed of his testimony, and to bear his share of hardship. Having exhibited courage and endured suffering, Paul is a living example for Timothy of the steadfastness

needed to be a pastor. Although Paul presents himself as an example through both his words and actions, neither his fidelity nor Timothy’s are accomplished by their own efforts. Paul repeatedly emphasizes the power and presence of God, both in himself and in Timothy. The gift of God includes the spirit of power and love and self-control. God provides strength; no matter the situation, both Paul and Timothy can rely on the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells within them.