

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #79

READING I Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

A reading from the Book of Leviticus

The LORD said to Moses,

“**Speak** to the whole Israelite community and tell them:
Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy.

“You shall **not** bear hatred for your brother or sister in your **heart**.
Though you may have to reprove your fellow citizen,
do **not incur** sin because of him.

Take **no revenge** and cherish **no grudge** against any of your people.
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
I am the LORD.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13 (8a)

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.

He pardons all your iniquities,
heals all your ills.
He redeems your life from destruction,
crowns you with kindness and compassion.

Merciful and gracious is the LORD,
slow to anger and abounding in kindness.
Not according to our sins does he deal
with us,
nor does he requite us according to
our crimes.

As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he put our transgressions
from us.

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who
fear him.

Leviticus = lih-VIF-ih-kuhs

Proclaim in a tone of clear purpose
and authority. Pause before you read the
Lord’s words.

Read slowly with a tone of firmness.

For meditation and context:

READING I

Of the many characteristics that Israel came to understand about the Lord God, holiness is foundational for their experience of God. God’s holiness signifies divine otherness, God’s being different, separate, and set apart from anything evil. The holy God is pure, clean, and strong. Though holiness does connote separateness, the holy God is deeply relational and is involved with the created world through acts of compassion, abiding guardianship, restoration of brokenness, and power that sustains the universe.

The holy God is transcendent, even while remaining unexpectedly near.

In today’s reading, the Lord commands that the community of Israel be holy because their God is holy. A long section in Leviticus, from which today’s reading is taken, is called the Holiness Code, a collection of numerous directives that explain how people are to live in holiness. Underlying all the commandments is the core belief that human persons are holy because they belong to God. As well as relating to God with awe, reverence, and right worship, God’s holy people are also to

care for one another. Not only are they to avoid such negative actions as deep-seated hatred, taking vengeance or bearing a grudge, they are also to love their neighbors as they love themselves. As they take responsibility for the well-being of others who belong to God, the holy people of God strengthen the bonds of community, so that all of them might live in holiness. The concluding verse, “I am the Lord (Yahweh)” is an emphatic statement of the identity of the holy God.

Corinthians = kohr-IN-thee-uhns

Pause after the greeting.

Proclaim slowly with good volume.

Emphasize the words in bold.

Pause.

St. Paul's words are strong. Be firm in your reading.

Pause.

Keep up your energy. Articulate your words.

Apollos = uh-POL-uhs

Cephas = SEE-fuhs

Pause before you say this line. Smile as you conclude.

READING II 1 Corinthians 3:16–23

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

Do **you not** know that **you** are the **temple** of **God**,
and that the **Spirit of God** dwells in **you**?

If anyone destroys God's temple, God will **destroy** that **person**;
for the temple of God, which **you** are, is holy.

Let **no one** deceive himself.

If any one among you considers himself wise in this age,
let him become a fool, so as to become wise.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God,
for it is written:

*God catches the wise in their own ruses,
and again:*

*The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise,
that they are vain.*

So let **no one** boast about human beings, for everything **belongs**
to **you**,

Paul or Apollos or Cephas,
or the **world** or **life** or **death**,
or the **present** or the **future**:

all belong to you, and you to Christ, and **Christ** to God.

READING II

"Temple of God" is the third image Paul uses to promote unity in the fractured Corinthian community. First he told them they are the field belonging to God, suggesting the many seeds, grains, and plantings needed for a rich harvest. Next, they are God's building, where each member builds on the foundation laid by Paul. In today's reading, they are a particular building: God's temple.

The Jerusalem temple, a structure made of inanimate stones, is the dwelling place of God; Paul tells the Corinthians to see themselves as a living temple in

Corinth. God's own Spirit has made a home within them, enlivening, empowering, and uniting the divided community. Similar to the Jerusalem temple as a holy place, the Corinthian temple is a holy people, set apart as God's dwelling place. Paul's warning about destroying the temple likely refers to damage or corruption of the structure. Those who corrupt the temple by false behaviors and beliefs will be brought to ruin themselves.

The next topic, wisdom, seems at first to be unrelated to the temple image. Yet those who consider themselves wise in this

age and rely on the wisdom of this world are the ones who are destroying the temple. As he often does in his letters, Paul supports his argument here by using Scripture. He links two texts (Job 5:13 and Psalm 94:11), associated by their common reference to "the wise." Together, they tell of the futility of human wisdom, judged as vain and deceptive by God. Those who boast about belonging to Paul or Apollos or Cephas are tangible examples of accepting the wisdom of this age. These leaders belong to the community, and all of them belong to Christ, who belongs to God.