

THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI)

LECTIONARY #167

READING I Deuteronomy 8:2–3, 14b–16a

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

Moses said to the people:

“Remember how for **forty years** now the **LORD, your God**, has directed **all** your journeying in the desert, so as to **test** you by affliction and find out whether or **not** it was your intention to **keep his commandments**.

He therefore let you be **afflicted** with **hunger**, and then **fed** you with **manna**, a food **unknown** to you and your fathers, in order to show you that **not** by bread **alone** does one **live**, but by **every** word that comes forth from the **mouth** of the **LORD**.

“Do not **forget** the **LORD, your God**, who **brought** you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery; who **guided** you through the vast and terrible desert with its **saraph serpents** and scorpions, its **parched** and waterless ground; who brought forth **water** for you from the flinty rock and **fed** you in the desert with manna, a food unknown to your fathers.”

Deuteronomy = doo-ter-AH-nuh-mee
Moses = MOH-zis.

Proclaim in a tone of firmness and authority.
Pause before you begin Moses' words.

Take your time with Moses' words. Proclaim with clarity. Rehearse for strong eye contact.

Use vocal variety in the reading.

Proclaim with high energy.

saraph = SAYR-uhf (fiery)

READING I The Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible, also called Torah) describes the deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh and the Egyptians at the Red Sea as the birth of the people of God. And it presents the subsequent period of their wandering in the desert, the setting for today's reading, as the time during which God and Israel got to know each other. In our passage, the desert is described as a vast and dangerous wasteland. Poisonous snakes, snakes with a fiery stinging bite, and scorpions live there. The ground is parched and waterless. Through

this area that is hostile to human life, God leads Israel for forty years in order to test them by affliction and find out how committed to him they are.

The test in this passage has two parts: to let Israel experience hunger and then to feed them manna, a food unknown to them or their ancestors. One goal of the test seems to be to teach the people that while God continually supplies what they need, these divine provisions may come from places and in forms they do not expect. In this text, God reveals that manna—probably

the resin of a tamarisk tree or the secretion of an insect that is found on it—is edible.

The narratives of the Lord bringing water from a rock follows a similar pattern. The people thirst because there seems to be no water to drink. Then, divine instructions go forth from the Lord to Moses commanding him to strike a rock. In the Sinai wilderness, water and condensation seep down and collect in pockets within rock formations, and there remain concealed from human sight. As Moses obeys the Lord's command, the thin layer of rock covering

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20 (12)

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

or

R. Alleluia.

Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem;
 praise your God, O Zion.
 For he has strengthened the bars
 of your gates;
 he has blessed your children within you.

He has granted peace in your borders;
 with the best of wheat he fills you.
 He sends forth his command to the earth;
 swiftly runs his word!

He has proclaimed his word to Jacob,
 his statutes and his ordinances to Israel.
 He has not done thus for any other nation;
 his ordinances he has not made known
 to them. Alleluia.

READING II 1 Corinthians 10:16–17

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

Brothers and sisters:

The **cup** of blessing that we bless,
 is it **not** a participation in the **blood of Christ**?

The **bread** that we break,
 is it **not** a participation in the **body of Christ**?

Because the loaf of bread is **one**,
 we, though many, are **one body**,
 for we **all** partake of the **one loaf**.

Corinthians = kohr-IN-thee-uhnz

Proclaim this beautiful reading with a tone of gentleness and gratefulness.

the hidden pool shatters and water flows out for the people to drink.

The last two verses of today's reading follow Deuteronomy 8:4–13 (which are omitted), wherein Moses addresses the people after they became prosperous in the land. He warns them not to exalt themselves, forgetting that their affluence is a divine blessing. It is not the product of their own abilities and efforts. Our passage picks up as Moses commands Israel (and their descendants including us) to "remember," to "not forget" all the things that God did for them. The Hebrew word for remember

denotes not only mental recall but more particularly a dynamic response to what is remembered. Put simply, to remember but do nothing is to forget. The proofs that Israel remembers the Lord's providential care in the wilderness are trust and obedience.

READING II The two verses of this reading belong to a larger section that warns the Corinthians against idolatry. It seems that they have not yet grasped that Baptism is a life-altering event, and that previous routines might not be compatible with their new life in Christ.

Some of them, for example, continue to join friends and associates for meals that are part of non-Christian liturgies. They apparently justify this custom by asserting that they neither believe in nor worship the gods celebrated in these rites. Paul informs them that what they view as a social event, he sees as idolatry.

He uses the term *koinonia*, variously translated as "participation," "fellowship," "sharing," or "communion," to explain why. In the Hellenistic (Greek) mystery religions of the area, the eating of a ritual meal was believed to effect *koinonia* with the god