

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

O Lord, you have enticed me,
and I was enticed;
you have overpowered me,
and you have prevailed.
I have become a laughingstock all day long;
everyone mocks me.
For whenever I speak, I must cry out,
I must shout, “Violence and destruction!”
For the word of the Lord has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
If I say, “I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,”
then within me there is something like a burning fire
shut up in my bones;
I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.

◆ ◆ ◆

PAUSE for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – A 22

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,
by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship.
Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,
so that you may discern what is the will of God –
what is good and acceptable and perfect.



Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – A 22

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus began to show his disciples
that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering
at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes,
and be killed,
and on the third day be raised.
And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying,
“God forbid it, Lord!
This must never happen to you.”
But he turned and said to Peter,
“Get behind me, Satan!
You are a stumbling block to me;
for you are thinking not as God does,
but as humans do.”
Then Jesus told his disciples,
“If anyone wants to become my follower,
let him deny himself
and take up his cross and follow me.
For whoever wants to save their life will lose it,
and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.
For what will it profit anyone
to gain the whole world but forfeit their life?
Or what will anyone give in return for their life?
For the Son of Man is to come with his angels
in the glory of his Father,
and then he will repay each according to their work.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Jeremiah 20:7-9

Of all the Old Testament prophets, Jeremiah comes closest to the New Testament understanding of what it means to be a bearer of God's word.

He foreshadows the truth, first emphasized in the New Testament by Paul, in opposition to the wandering preachers, who set great store in their own miraculous powers and visionary experiences, that witness means suffering.

This theme was then taken up by Mark (followed, as we see in today's gospel, by Matthew) in his redaction of the Jesus tradition.

It is this aspect of today's passage from Jeremiah that the caption rightly emphasizes: "The word of the Lord has meant derision for me."

Responsorial Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

Many of the psalms are intensely personal, but when they were adopted into the liturgy of the temple, they acquired a corporate meaning, the "I" of the psalmist being expanded to embrace the whole people of God.

In the person of Jesus Christ, who is the true Israel, the psalm is narrowed down again to a single person, the "I" of Christ himself. But then it expands once more to include the body of Christ, which in him can take these words to itself.

The people of God on their pilgrimage pass through a dry and weary land where there is no water.

But in the sanctuary, as they assemble to celebrate the liturgy, they have a pledge and assurance of the ultimate vindication of Christ's cause.

They feast together on "marrow and fat" and praise God with joyful lips, even in the midst of the dry and weary land.

Reading II: Romans 12:1-2

It is a pity that the text as printed omits a tiny yet crucial word—"therefore" (Greek: *oun*): "I appeal to you therefore, brethren." It is crucial because Rm 12-15 of Romans present Christian ethics as "therefore ethics," that is to say, Christian ethics is a response to what God has done in Christ.

Only after expounding the redemptive act of God in Christ and setting it in the context of salvation history could Paul go on to discuss ethical problems. This ethic is seen as the true Christian worship.

In a celebrated essay, Ernst Käsemann suggested that Paul is in some way anticultic, that for him true Christian worship is to be seen in ethical behavior, not in the cultus. This is the kind of either-or that appeals to the German mind, but it does less than justice to the inclusiveness of the biblical material.

No one doubts that liturgy must penetrate life, but life must first find its focus in liturgy. We present our bodies as a living sacrifice in the liturgy (Cranmer included this phrase in the eucharistic prayer, and it has remained a feature of Anglican liturgies ever since) precisely in order that we may go out into the world and present them in life.

Christian ethics is not primarily expressed in a code. Paul will give something that looks like a code in Rm 12-15, with many single commandments.

But these are meant as illustrations (C. H. Dodd) of what a renewed mind, not conformed to this world, will lead to.

In an apt illustration, John A. T. Robinson has spoken of the Christian's "antennae," which should enable one to discern the will of God in a given situation and which arises out of a transformed mind.

Such transformation takes place through hearing the Word of God and through offering oneself to God in union with Christ's suffering. This takes place quite concretely in the liturgy.

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-27

As we noted in the comments for last Sunday, Matthew has detached this section from Mark's pericope and placed it by itself.

As in the second reading today, a tiny but significant word has been left out at the beginning—the word "then" (Greek: *tote*): "Then Jesus began to show his disciples." This word detaches this section and yet links it as a sequel to the foregoing pericope.

The other major alteration Matthew has made in the Marcan text is in the final verse (Mt 16:27), which he has converted into a scene of the parousia—Last Judgment: "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what he has done."

For Mark, the court of the Son of Man will vindicate the church and pass judgment upon the believing world. For Matthew, it is the church that will be judged—a theme that he hammers home again and again, right up to the parable of the sheep and the goats.

The church will be judged according to the fidelity of its discipleship, even at the cost of taking up its cross and following Jesus, in its readiness to lose its life for his sake.

Reginald H. Fuller