

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Moses spoke to the people; he said:

“The Lord your God will raise up for you  
a Prophet like me from among your own kin;  
you shall heed such a Prophet.

This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb  
on the day of the assembly when you said:

‘Let me not hear the voice of the Lord my God any more,  
or ever again see this great fire, lest I die.’

Then the Lord replied to me:

‘They are right in what they have said.

I will raise up for them a Prophet like you  
from among their own kin;

I will put my words in his mouth,  
and he shall speak to them everything that I command.

‘Anyone who does not heed the words  
that he shall speak in my name,  
I myself will hold him accountable.

But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods,  
or who presumes to speak in my name  
a word that I have not commanded him to speak –  
that Prophet shall die.”

Horeb = HOH-reb

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



The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

A reading from the first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters,  
I want you to be free from anxieties.  
The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord,  
how to please the Lord;  
but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world,  
how to please his wife,  
and his interests are divided.  
The unmarried woman and the virgin  
are concerned about the affairs of the Lord,  
so that they may be holy in body and spirit;  
but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world,  
how to please her husband.  
I say this for your own benefit,  
not to put any restraint upon you,  
but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.

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



The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – B 4

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

*Glory to you, O Lord*

The disciples went to Capernaum;  
and when the Sabbath came,  
Jesus entered the synagogue and taught.  
They were astounded at his teaching,  
for he taught them as one having authority,  
and not as the scribes.  
Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit,  
and he cried out,  
“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?  
Have you come to destroy us?  
I know who you are, the Holy One of God.”  
But Jesus rebuked him, saying,  
“Be silent, and come out of him!”  
And the unclean spirit, convulsing the man  
and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.  
They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another,  
“What is this? A new teaching – with authority!  
He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”  
At once Jesus’ fame began to spread  
throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Capernaum = kuh-**PUHR**-nay-uhm



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

### **Reading I: Deuteronomy 18:15-20**

In the original intention of the Deuteronomic author, the “prophet” whose coming Moses predicts stood for the prophetic office as such, exercised by a whole series of prophets in Israel. They were understood by the Deuteronomist as standing in a charismatic succession from Moses.

Later on this text was interpreted eschatologically in certain circles of pre-Christian Judaism, as we see from the Dead Sea Scrolls (1 QS 7) and from the evidence of the Fourth Gospel (see John 1:21; 6:14; 7:40).

In these circles Deut 18:15 was interpreted as a prediction that God would send one final prophet (the “eschatological prophet,” as modern scholars call this figure) before the End.

Jesus’ own self-understanding, though perhaps not quite so explicit, was in line with this, for he understood his mission in terms of proclaiming the dawning of God’s kingdom, and himself as the last messenger before its consummation. It was apparently left to the earliest post-Easter community to work out an explicit Christological interpretation of Jesus in terms of the eschatological prophet like Moses (see especially Acts 3).

As originally intended, this was a high Christology, emphasizing not only Jesus’ authoritative teaching but also his agency of redemption, just as Moses had led the Israelites out of Egypt as the agent of God’s earlier act of redemption.

When Christianity moved to the Hellenistic world, this early Christological title seemed inadequate and was replaced by such titles as Kyrios, Son of God, and Logos.

The selection of Deut 18:15-20 for today seems to have been determined by the allusion to Jesus’ teaching with authority in the gospel reading.

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### **Responsorial Psalm: 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9**

The *Venite* consists of two parts: a call to worship and a warning against neglect of the word of God. The first part is very popular among Anglicans as the invitatory canticle of Morning Prayer, but in most recent revisions the stern warnings of the second part have often been omitted.

Yet, it was this second part that the author of Hebrews (Heb 3:7-4:13) took up as especially relevant to his Church. The situation of the people of this Church was that they were growing stale instead of advancing in the Christian life, just as Israel grew weary in the wilderness.

These same verses are used on the third Sunday of Lent in series A and on the eighteenth Sunday of the year in series C. Today the refrain serves to pick up the warning to give heed to the prophet like Moses.

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### **Reading II: 1 Corinthians 7:32-35**

One can only speculate what motives led to the choice of the caption, which speaks of the advantage

of the unmarried state to women and, unlike the text, says nothing about men!

Paul's views on marriage and celibacy cut right across the views commonly held by Christians today. He commends celibacy for both men and women, but regards marriage as perfectly lawful and proper for any Christian. At the same time, however, he has a distinct preference for celibacy.

Both states have their advantages and their perils, but on balance, according to Paul, the celibate, whether man or woman, is less likely to be distracted from the service of the Lord.

At the same time, certain points of difference have to be noted about Paul's teaching on celibacy compared with that of later times. Paul refuses to lay down a hard and fast rule (v. 35: "not to lay any restraint upon you"). The celibate life requires a charism that not every Christian has (see v. 7).

Yet, against much contemporary post-Freudian opinion, Paul clearly believes that celibacy is the higher state. This is seen from what he says in other parts of this chapter (vv. 6, 8, 25, 38).

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### **Gospel: Mark 1:21-28**

This passage follows immediately upon last week's gospel reading. After the call of the first disciples, Mark has Jesus embark upon his public ministry in Galilee. The first item of material that Mark selects for inclusion from his material is an exorcism. Perhaps the miracles he includes from 1:20 to 3:12 are from an earlier collection of miracle stories that he edited and supplemented with other non-miracle material.

One special feature of this editorial work is the evangelist's emphasis on Jesus' teaching, though without indicating the content of that teaching. The effect of this is to play down the one-sided emphasis on the miracles that such a pre-Marcian collection of miracle stories might have created. The Marcan tradition saw the miracles as displays of Jesus' authority.

The Greek word for "authority" in the "choric ending" of the exorcism story is *exousia*. This word also has the connotation of power, particularly in this context of miracle. Mark does not deny that Jesus displayed both authority and power in his miracles, but for him the miracles were only one aspect of Jesus' authority.

The primary emphasis rests upon his teaching: "he taught as one who had authority [*exousia*—the word is picked up by the Marcan redaction from the body of the exorcism story], and not as the scribes." The exorcism follows merely as an illustration of the power of Jesus' teaching with authority. "In Jesus' word heaven breaks in and hell is destroyed. His word is deed" (Eduard Schweizer).

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