



## SUNDAY, AUGUST 28–SEPTEMBER 3

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTIONARY 22

### FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

A reading from Deuteronomy.

<sup>1</sup>So now, Israel,  
give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe,  
so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD,  
the God of your ancestors, is giving you.

<sup>2</sup>You must neither add anything to what I command you  
nor take away anything from it,  
but keep the commandments of the LORD your God  
with which I am charging you.

<sup>6</sup>You must observe them diligently,  
for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples,  
who, when they hear all these statutes, will say,  
“Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!”

<sup>7</sup>For what other great nation has a god so near to it  
as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him?

<sup>8</sup>And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances  
as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

<sup>9</sup>But take care and watch yourselves closely,  
so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen  
nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life;  
make them known to your children and your children’s children.

The word of the Lord.                      or                      Word of God, word of life.

### PSALMODY: Psalm 15

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**FIRST READING**     *Deuteronomy = dew-ter-ON-uh-mee*

The reading requires the voice of God. It is God’s own commentary on the ten commandments. The point is that the law is given in love. God’s laying down the law for God’s people indicates just how much God loves them: Take heed. Obey them. Teach them to your children. I love you.

## SECOND READING: James 1:17-27

A reading from James.

<sup>17</sup>Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift,  
is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,  
with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

<sup>18</sup>In fulfillment of his own purpose  
he gave us birth by the word of truth,  
so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

<sup>19</sup>You must understand this, my beloved:

let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger;

<sup>20</sup>for your anger does not produce God's righteousness.

<sup>21</sup>Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness,  
and welcome with meekness the implanted word  
that has the power to save your souls.

<sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word,

and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

<sup>23</sup>For if any are hearers of the word and not doers,  
they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror;

<sup>24</sup>for they look at themselves and, on going away,  
immediately forget what they were like.

<sup>25</sup>But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty,  
and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—  
they will be blessed in their doing.

<sup>26</sup>If any think they are religious,  
and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts,  
their religion is worthless.

<sup>27</sup>Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this:  
to care for orphans and widows in their distress,  
and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

The word of the Lord.

or

Word of God, word of life.

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### SECOND READING

This wonderful lesson merits special attention and preparation. It has several rare and wonderful turns of phrase with which the reader must be comfortable before approaching the reading desk on Sunday. Verses 17 and 21 are examples. The images are close to poetic. A well-prepared reader will have spent sufficient time visualizing the images and will take all the time she or he needs in delivering them to the hearer.

## GOSPEL: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

The holy gospel according to Mark.

<sup>1</sup>Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes  
who had come from Jerusalem gathered around <sup>1</sup>Jesus,  
<sup>2</sup>they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands,  
that is, without washing them.  
<sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews,  
do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands,  
thus observing the tradition of the elders;  
<sup>4</sup>and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it;  
and there are also many other traditions that they observe,  
the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.)  
<sup>5</sup>So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him,  
“Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders,  
but eat with defiled hands?”  
<sup>6</sup>He said to them,  
“Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,  
    ‘This people honors me with their lips,  
        but their hearts are far from me;  
    <sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me,  
        teaching human precepts as doctrines.’  
<sup>8</sup>You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

<sup>14</sup>Then he called the crowd again and said to them,  
“Listen to me, all of you, and understand:  
<sup>15</sup>there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile,  
but the things that come out are what defile.”  
<sup>21</sup>For it is from within, from the human heart,  
that evil intentions come:  
fornication, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup>adultery,  
avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness,  
envy, slander, pride, folly.  
<sup>23</sup>All these evil things come from within,  
and they defile a person.”

The gospel of the Lord.

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**GOSPEL**    *licentiousness = ly-SEN-chus-ness*

An excellent reading of the gospel requires some consideration of what an irritated or angered Jesus sounded like. The church confesses this Jesus to be “true man.” Discover Jesus’ tone of voice and bring it energetically to verse 6. It will then serve as a helpful springboard to our Lord’s urgent instruction that follows.