



SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

FIRST READING: Acts 16:16-34

A reading from Acts.

¹⁶One day, as we were going to the place of prayer,
we met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination
and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling.

¹⁷While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out,
“These men are slaves of the Most High God,
who proclaim to you a way of salvation.”

¹⁸She kept doing this for many days.
But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit,
“I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”
And it came out that very hour.

¹⁹But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone,
they seized Paul and Silas
and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities.

²⁰When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said,
“These men are disturbing our city;
they are Jews ²¹and are advocating customs
that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.”

²²The crowd joined in attacking them,
and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing
and ordered them to be beaten with rods.

²³After they had given them a severe flogging,
they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely.

²⁴Following these instructions,
he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God,
and the prisoners were listening to them.

²⁶Suddenly there was an earthquake,
so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken;
and immediately all the doors were opened
and everyone’s chains were unfastened.

²⁷When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open,
he drew his sword and was about to kill himself,

FIRST READING

This is a story of high adventure and requires the appropriate energy. Watch for the dramatic markers and use them to enrich the story and keep it moving. “She would cry out” ... “Paul (was) very much annoyed” ... “They (gave) them a severe flogging” ... “There was an earthquake so violent...” In the midst of all the storytelling excitement do not lose sight of the fact that verse 34b is the climax of the reading.

since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped.

²⁸But Paul shouted in a loud voice,
“Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.”

²⁹The jailer called for lights,
and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

³⁰Then he brought them outside and said,
“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

³¹They answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus,
and you will be saved, you and your household.”

³²They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

³³At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds;
then he and his entire family were baptized without delay.

³⁴He brought them up into the house and set food before them;
and he and his entire household rejoiced
that he had become a believer in God.

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

PSALMODY: Psalm 97

SECOND READING: Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

A reading from Revelation.

¹²“See, I am coming soon;
my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone’s work.

¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

¹⁴Blessed are those who wash their robes,
so that they will have the right to the tree of life
and may enter the city by the gates.

¹⁶“It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you
with this testimony for the churches.

I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.”

And let everyone who hears say, “Come.”

And let everyone who is thirsty come.

Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift. ▶

SECOND READING

These are the very last words of the Bible, announcing the imminent return of our Lord Jesus. They require a sense of majesty and power and promise! The technical challenge presented by the reading is the number of speakers, at least two of which say the same thing (“Come.”). Work at helping the assembly hear the quotations as quotations and distinguish between voices.

²⁰The one who testifies to these things says,
“Surely I am coming soon.”
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

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

GOSPEL: John 17:20-26

The holy gospel according to John.

「Jesus prayed:」

²⁰“I ask not only on behalf of these,
but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,
²¹that they may all be one.

As you, Father, are in me and I am in you,
may they also be in us,
so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

²²The glory that you have given me I have given them,
so that they may be one, as we are one,

²³I in them and you in me,
that they may become completely one,
so that the world may know that you have sent me
and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me,
may be with me where I am, to see my glory,
which you have given me
because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

²⁵“Righteous Father, the world does not know you,
but I know you;
and these know that you have sent me.

²⁶I made your name known to them,
and I will make it known,
so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them,
and I in them.”

The gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL

This well known prayer is a persuasive argument for reading the text aloud more than once prior to reading it in the assembly. Unless the reader has a clear sense of where each sentence is headed, it is easy to get tangled in the sentences' interiors. A quiet, internal urgency will provide the appropriate tone.