



FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28–FEBRUARY 3 (if before Transfiguration)

LECTIONARY 4

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 1:4-10

A reading from Jeremiah.

⁴Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

⁶Then I said,

“Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.”

⁷But the LORD said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’;
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you.

⁸Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.”

⁹Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth;

and the LORD said to me,

“Now I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to pull down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.”

The word of the Lord.

or

Word of God, word of life.

PSALMODY: Psalm 71:1-6

FIRST READING *Jeremiah = jehr-eh-MY-uh*

“I appointed you” No excuses, please! The Lord “touches the mouth” of the prophet and “puts his words in the mouth” of the reader and all who have been called to proclaim the holy name. This is a delicate little dialog between the Lord and the hesitant chosen one. The hearer will be helped to the degree that the reader can produce a sense of “telling a story” in this reading. See the characters first. Then help us to hear them.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

A reading from First Corinthians.

¹If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love,
I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

²And if I have prophetic powers,
and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains,
but do not have love, I am nothing.

³If I give away all my possessions,
and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,
but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient; love is kind;
love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude.
It does not insist on its own way;
it is not irritable or resentful;

⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends.

But as for prophecies, they will come to an end;
as for tongues, they will cease;
as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

⁹For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part;

¹⁰but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.

¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child,
I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child;
when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly,
but then we will see face to face.

Now I know only in part;
then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

¹³And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;
and the greatest of these is love.

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

SECOND READING *prophesy = PROF-eh-sigh*

Of all God's good gifts, St. Paul says, love is to be most highly valued. A word of caution: the danger with very familiar texts is that we pass over them too lightly, unheeding. Take time in your preparation to re-examine the lesson. Use it for devotional reading this week. Let the words sink into your heart as though hearing them for the first time, and then communicate them in that way.

GOSPEL: Luke 4:21-30

The holy gospel according to Luke.

²¹Then Jesus began to say to all in the synagogue in Nazareth,
“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

²²All spoke well of him
and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.
They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”

²³He said to them,
“Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’
And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown
the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’”

²⁴And he said,
“Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown.
²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah,
when the heaven was shut up three years and six months,
and there was a severe famine over all the land;
²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them
except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon.
²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha,
and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”

²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage.

²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town,
and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built,
so that they might hurl him off the cliff.

³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

The gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL Capernaum = kuh-PER-nih-um Zarephath = ZAR-eh-fath Sidon = SY-dun Naaman =
NAY-uh-mun Syrian = SIHR-ee-un

Varying the pace of the delivery within the text gives it additional texture. Beginning the gospel at a deliberate pace will provide a rich contrast to the sharply critical history lesson in verses 24-27 if the pace is accelerated there. Allow the criticism to hit the mark with a solid pause between verses 27 and 28. Help the assembly feel the rage in verses 28 and 29 as well as the mysterious nature of the Lord’s passage “through the midst of them.”