

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
5 October 2025

Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day
Part Two: reflections on the readings
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY
Lectionary: 141

Reading 1 Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

How long, O LORD? I cry for help
but you do not listen!
I cry out to you, "Violence!"
but you do not intervene.
Why do you let me see ruin;
why must I look at misery?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and clamorous discord.
Then the LORD answered me and said:
Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets,
so that one can read it readily.
For the vision still has its time,
presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint;
if it delays, wait for it,
it will surely come, it will not be late.
The rash one has no integrity;
but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.
Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.
R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds,

the flock he guides.

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:

"Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,

as in the day of Massah in the desert,

Where your fathers tempted me;

they tested me though they had seen my works."

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Reading 2 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Beloved:

I remind you, to stir into flame

the gift of God that you have

through the imposition of my hands.

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice

but rather of power and love and self-control.

So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord,

nor of me, a prisoner for his sake;

but bear your share of hardship for the gospel

with the strength that comes from God.

Take as your norm the sound words

that you heard from me,

in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Guard this rich trust with the help of the Holy Spirit

that dwells within us.

Alleluia 1 Peter 1:25

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

The word of the Lord remains forever.

This is the word that has been proclaimed to you.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Luke 17:5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

The Lord replied,

"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed,

you would say to this mulberry tree,

'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,'

and it would obey you.

"Who among you would say to your servant

who has just come in from plowing

or tending sheep in the field,
'Come here immediately and take your place at table'?
Would he not rather say to him,
'Prepare something for me to eat.
Put on your apron and wait on me
while I eat and drink.
You may eat and drink when I am finished'?
Is he grateful to that servant
because he did what was commanded?
So should it be with you.
When you have done all you have been commanded,
say, 'We are unprofitable servants;
we have done what we were obliged to do.'"

PART TWO: HOMILY ON THE READINGS

Yesterday was the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, *il Poverello*. To honor this great saint, let me share with you a memory I have of my grandmother. Grandma was greatly devoted to Saint Francis.

Grandma taught her grandchildren important things when we were little. I don't think that she ever set out to do this, but she certainly did.

Saint Francis famously told his friars that they must preach the Good News of the Gospel without ceasing... and when necessary, they should even use words.

Francis was emphasizing the important of teaching by example. More often than not, we spread the Gospel most successfully when we teach by what we do, not by what we say. Certainly, this was true of my grandmother.

When I was a "wee broth of a boy," probably no more than nine or ten years old, I was with my grandmother as she was running errands around town, over in Petaluma.

Grandma stopped at our parish church, Saint Vincent's, and someone put a box in the trunk of her old Buick. Then she drove up to a house in an old neighborhood in Petaluma. Telling me to stay in the car, Grandma pulled the box out of the trunk. I remember noticing that it was full of groceries. She carried the box up the steps of the house

and rang the doorbell. A lady appeared and Grandma carried the box into the front hall. After that, the two women stood on the porch and spoke to one another for a few minutes.

When Grandma got back into the car, I was full of questions.

Gramma, why did you bring that lady a box of groceries?

... okay, but why does she need groceries? Can't she go to the store and get groceries for herself?

... but I don't get it: why do we have to bring her groceries?

I had a lot of questions. In fact, I may have got on Grandma's nerves that day. But, in any event, I remember Grandma explaining to me that, sometimes, families have problems and don't have the money to buy groceries. So people at the church fill up boxes with groceries and bring the groceries to the families that need them.

I was astounded to think that there were families that didn't have enough money to buy groceries.

I also remember thinking, as we drove home, something like the following:

Hmmm... so this is what we do. We bring groceries to families that are having problems and can't buy groceries for themselves.

I will never forget what Grandma did for the lady that day. Even better: I will never forget what Grandma did for *me* that day. She was teaching me by example. And, I'm sure that Grandma, aside from being a little exasperated by all my questions, never gave it much of a thought.

Remember what Saint Francis told his monks: We must preach the Good News without ceasing... and when necessary, use words. More often than not, we preach the

Good News of the Gospel most eloquently when we teach by example.

And most of all, never forget that our kids are paying attention not only to what we say, but what we are doing.

In Luke's Gospel, today, Jesus tells his disciples they are to be busy in serving the needs of others in their community. Moreover, he does not want us to boast about our service or brag about the good we have done. He tells the disciples,

When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'

I think Grandma liked this teaching. She would say that bringing boxes of food to families that are going through a rough patch is just what we are supposed to do. No need to make a fuss. No need to say a lot about it. Just deliver the groceries.

And remember: your grandkids are paying attention.

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually

"reading" the Bible. Rather, we are "listening" to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the homily on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?