



Proclaiming the Word

at

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church

The Lector

Ministry

**Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday, September 13th**

**Sirach 27:30 - 28:7
Romans 14:7-9**

Reflection on Lectoring

Lectors have an inescapable responsibility.

You cannot speak about things you do not know or to which you have given little reflection. People can sense how you really feel about your words. They can also sense whether what you say really matters.

There is an additional responsibility. The lector's purpose is not to seek agreement from those who hear him or her. The goal is to open a conversation in which each hearer becomes engaged in his or her own discovery of meaning.

There is a third party in this conversation – the Holy Spirit speaking through you, connecting in a very personal way with each member of the congregation.

Ideally your hearers will be engaged by the Spirit to use their own life experiences to achieve a deeper understanding of the Scriptures – an understanding that makes it meaningful and memorable even after Mass.

Despite imperfections and weaknesses, lectors still have an inescapable responsibility. Perhaps when feelings of inadequacy arise, the most important thing you can do is trust that God has put you there for a reason.

First Reading

Harsh Words

Today's first reading from the Book of Sirach starts in a very foreboding way. "Wrath and anger are hateful things." It continues with a strong admonition: "...remember death and decay and cease from sin!"

As a proclaimer of these words, what might you think the holy Spirit wants people to hear?

Perhaps they can find some reassurance in hearing, "Forgive your neighbor's injustice, then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven."

Perhaps there is comfort in knowing that God's commandments are not capricious, that they are based on fairness and justice. Perhaps we can be reassured that, despite our sinfulness, God still loves us enough to use our freedom while also warning us of life's pitfalls.

Perhaps also, we might remember some very similar words from a prayer that came directly from the mouth of Jesus: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Second Reading

Never Alone

In his Letter to the Romans St. Paul was writing to very diverse groups of people. It may seem strange that in just three verses he uses words about living and dying eleven times. Does that approach bring people together? Does it help them find sense of community?

The verses in today's second reading can be read in under one minute. Will the people to whom you read them feel a sense of community?

Perhaps verse eight which contains the word "we" six times might offer an answer:

For if we live, we live for the Lord,
and if we die, we die for the Lord:
so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.