

ASH WEDNESDAY
(Yr A-B-C)

Reading 1

Citation: Joel, Chap. 2, Verses 12-18
Joel 2: 12-18

Joel is speaking as God, warning the people to change their ways. They must change or face certain disaster, he warns. There is passion, here, urgency, insistence. At the end, the tone changes (the people have changed) to quiet confidence. Be Joel!

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel

Even now,
says the LORD,
return to me with your whole heart, (very short pause)
with fasting,
and weeping,
and mourning; (short pause)

Rend your hearts,
not your garments, (very short pause)
and return to the LORD, your God.
For gracious and merciful is he,
slow to anger,
rich in kindness,
and relenting in punishment. (Pause)

Perhaps he will again relent (doubt describes this sentence!)
and leave behind him
a blessing, (Urgency! Confidence)
Offerings
and libations for the LORD, your God. (very short pause)
Blow the trumpet in Zion! (A LIST!)
proclaim a fast, {Vary pace, volume, tone from
call an assembly; {line to line throughout the list
Gather the people, {
notify the congregation; {
Assemble the elders, {
gather the children and the infants at the breast; { (very short pause)

Let the bridegroom quit his room, (Somewhat continuing the List
and the bride her chamber. (but different tone - serious

Between the porch and the altar
let the priests,
the ministers of the LORD,
weep
and say, (very short pause)

Proclamation Format

“Spare, O LORD, your people,
and make not your heritage a reproach,
with the nations ruling over them!

(beseeching!)
(urgency)
(very short pause)

Why should they say among the peoples,
"Where is their God?"

(very short pause)
(almost disbelief?)

Then the LORD was stirred to concern for his land
and took pity on his people.

(Narrator takes over)
(steadily slow down)

The word of the Lord

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Reading 2

Citation: 2 Corinthian, Chap. 5, Verse 20 -- Chap. 6, Verse 2
2 Corinthians 5: 20 - 6:2

St. Paul urges his community to be mindful of their need to repent and change their worldly ways. He reminds them of Christ's death for their sins and the grace of salvation they have received. He is very passionate about this – a central tenet of his evangelizing. Be the passionate Paul!

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters: (Get attention!)

We are ambassadors for Christ,
as if God were appealing through us. (short pause)

We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God. (almost begging!)
(short pause)

For our sake (need to observe the
he made him to be sin who did not know sin, (emphasized words
so that we might become the righteousness of God (in this sentence
in him. (very short pause)
working together, then,
we appeal to you
not to receive the grace of God in vain. (slower) (very short pause)

For he says:
In an acceptable time I heard you, (change voice tone)
and on the day of salvation I helped you. (“ “) (short pause)

Behold,
now is a very acceptable time; (matter-of-factly) (very short pause)
behold,
now is the day of salvation. (2 stresses) (triumph!)

The word of the Lord

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GOSPEL

Citation: *Matthew, Chap. 6, Verses 1-6, 16-18*
Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18

Jesus' instruction regarding public displays of "pious" behavior and a better way of acting with pious intent. It contrasts His disdain for hypocrites with His (and God's) acceptance, love and understanding of the poor and marginalized, and gives these as an example of how to behave. He is a strong, insistent teacher with a heart. Try to see yourself as Jesus would be in this situation and proclaim accordingly.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father.

(very short pause)

When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others.

(parenthetical) (very short pause)

Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.

(very short pause)

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret.

(almost parenthetical)

And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

(very short pause)

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them.

(disdain - entire sentence)

Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.

(very short pause)

But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret.

(separate these phrases)

“
“

And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

(almost parenthetical)
(very short pause)

Proclamation Format

"When you fast,
do not look gloomy
like the hypocrites. (parenthetical)

They neglect their appearance,
so that they may appear to others to be fasting. (almost parenthetical)

Amen, I say to you,
they have received their reward. (very short pause)

But when you fast,
anoint your head
and wash your face,
so that you may not appear to be fasting, (almost parenthetical)

except to your Father
who is hidden. (almost parenthetical)

And your Father (slower pace to the end)
who sees what is hidden
will repay you."

The Gospel of the Lord.