

# TWENTYFIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

Reading 1

Citation: Joshua, Chap. 24, Verses 1-2a, 15-17, 18b  
Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b

Joshua throws out a challenge to his people to follow him. Couched in terms of following God it is nonetheless a challenge. He is convinced of God's Providence in the past and that it will continue even in the strange land the Israelites find themselves. The response of the people is overwhelming; they will follow Joshua (and they understand God's Providence as well as Joshua does). Be the convinced leader Joshua. Then, speaking as the people, demonstrate your conviction about God and His Providence in your own life.

## A Reading from the Book of Joshua

Joshua gathered together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem, [short pause]  
summoning their elders, [a list! Vary tone, volume, etc. as is comfortable for you]  
their leaders,  
their judges, and their officers. (short pause)

When they stood in ranks before God, [short pause]  
Joshua addressed all the people: [short pause]

"If it does not please you to serve the LORD, [neutral tone]  
decide today whom you will serve, [firm] [very short pause]  
the gods your fathers served beyond the River [voice up] [firm]  
or the gods of the Amorites [voice down] [firm]  
in whose country you are now dwelling. [parenthetical expression]

As for me and my household, [raise voice; firm conviction]  
we will serve the LORD." [exulting] [Pause]

But the people answered, [Pause]  
"Far be it from us to forsake the LORD [a tone of denial]  
for the service of other gods. [parenthetical expression]

For it was the LORD, [convinced]  
our God, [pride]  
who brought us and our fathers up [firm, convinced]  
out of the land of Egypt, " "  
out of a state of slavery. " " [Pause]

He performed those great miracles before our very eyes [short pause; amazement]  
and protected us along our entire journey  
and among the peoples through whom we passed. [Pause]

Therefore [short pause]  
we also will serve the LORD, [firm]  
for he is our God." [very firm, convinced]

## The Word of the Lord.

## TWENTYFIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

Reading 2  
**LONGER FORM**

*Citation: Ephesians, Chap. 5, Verses 21-32*  
*Ephesians 5:21-32*

**Often misunderstood, Paul likens the love between Christ and His Church as similar to the love that should exist between wife and husband. Help your listeners discern this by taking your time as you develop Paul's argument. The suggested stresses assume you believe the relationship Paul describes is both valid and real, not just an ideal.**

### A Reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

(get listeners' attention)

Be subordinate to one another  
out of reverence for Christ.

(parenthetical) (very short pause)

Wives should be subordinate to their husbands  
as to the Lord.

(parenthetical)

For the husband is head of his wife  
just as Christ is head of the church,  
he himself the savior of the body.

(parenthetical)

As the church is subordinate to Christ,  
so wives should be subordinate to their husbands  
in every thing.

(short pause)

Husbands, love your wives,  
even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her  
to sanctify her,  
cleansing her by the bath of water with the word,  
that he might present to himself  
the church in splendor,  
without spot  
or wrinkle  
or any such thing,  
that she might be holy  
and without blemish.

(change tone; proud?)

(almost parenthetical)

So also  
husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.  
He who loves his wife  
loves himself.  
For no one hates his own flesh  
but rather nourishes and cherishes it,  
even as Christ does the church,  
because we are members of his body.

(almost parenthetical)

*For this reason*

(a quote; change tone)

**Proclamation Format**

*a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife,  
and the two shall become one flesh.*

(short pause)

This is a great mystery,  
but I speak in reference to Christ  
and the church.

(vary tone as a stress)

**The Word of the Lord.**

## TWENTYFIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

Reading 2  
**SHORTER FORM**

Citation: *Ephesians, Chap. 5, Verses 2a, 25-32*  
*Ephesians 5:2a, 25-32*

Brothers and sisters: [solicitous]

Live in love, [urgent; the key phrase of the reading] [short pause]  
as Christ loved us. [short pause]

Husbands, [emphasize “husbands” to get their attention] [very short pause]  
love your wives, [gentle stress on “love”] [very short pause]  
even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her (parenthetical?)  
to sanctify hers,  
cleansing her by the bath of water with the word,  
that he might present to himself the church in splendor,  
without spot [voice up]  
or wrinkle [voice down]  
or any such thing, [voice neutral]  
that she might be holy [very short pause]  
and without blemish. [short pause]

So also [short pause]  
husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his wife [voice up] [very short pause]  
loves himself. [voice down] [be firm, convinced] [very short pause]

For no one hates his own flesh [firm, convinced] [very short pause]  
but rather nourishes and cherishes it,  
even as Christ does the church,  
because we are members of his body. [the explanation!] [short pause]

*For this reason* [voice change – quotation] [short pause]  
*a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife,*  
*and the two*  
*shall become one flesh.* [very short pause]

This is a great mystery, [Pause]  
but I speak in reference to Christ  
and the church. [very short pause]

**The Word of the Lord.**

## TWENTYFIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

GOSPEL

Citation: *John, Chap. 6, Verses 60-69*  
*John 8: 60-69*

This passage is a continuation of Jesus' discussion with his disciples after having fed the 5,000 people. Assume your listeners know the background story. The emphasis of Jesus' remarks is on our belief in Him as our Savior, our Brother, and our God. Reflect this perception with the forceful way you proclaim Peter's response to Jesus' question.

### A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Many of Jesus' disciples who were listening said, (very short pause)

"This saying is hard;  
who can accept it?" (disappointed? discouraged?)

Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, (very short pause)  
"Does this shock you? (genuine question)  
What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?" "

It is the spirit that gives life,  
while the flesh is of no avail. (almost parenthetical)  
The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. (firm!)

But there are some of you who do not believe." (very short pause)

Jesus knew from the beginning  
the ones who would not believe  
and the one who would betray him. (parenthetical)

And he said,  
"For this reason  
I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father." (firm)

As a result of this,  
many of his disciples returned to their former way of life  
and no longer accompanied him. (disappointed)  
"

Jesus then said to the Twelve,  
"Do you also want to leave?" (expecting a negative?)

Simon Peter answered him,  
"Master,  
to whom shall we go? (almost a rhetorical question?)  
You have the words of eternal life. (strong stress on "life")

We have come to believe  
and are convinced  
that you are the Holy One of God." (growing firmness)  
" (3 stresses)

**The Gospel of the Lord.**