

17th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C

Reading 1

**Citation: Genesis, Chap. 18, Verses 20-32
Genesis 18: 20-32**

A story about an "argument" with two speaking characters who sound very different from each other. You must take both roles! God is the commander – strong, insistent (yet open to a good argument). Abraham is also a leader but one who is very solicitous for his people. Consequently, as the stakes get higher and higher Abraham's voice reflects his understanding that he treads on potentially very dangerous ground! Make sure Abraham's voice reflects this increasing apprehension.

A reading from the Book of Genesis

In those days, the LORD said: (God is thinking out loud)
"The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great,
and their sin so grave,
that I must go down
and see whether or not their actions fully correspond to the cry against them
that comes to me.
I mean to find out." (He means business!) (pause)

While Abraham's visitors walked on farther toward Sodom,
the LORD remained standing before Abraham. (short pause)

Then Abraham drew nearer and said:
"Will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty?
Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city;
would you wipe out the place, rather than spare it
for the sake of the fifty innocent people within it? (disbelief!) (very short pause)
(a declaration)
Far be it from you to do such a thing,
to make the innocent die with the guilty (disbelieving) (very short pause)
so that the innocent and the guilty would be treated alike! (this is what Abraham believes)
Should not the judge of all the world act with justice?" (very short pause)
(insistent!)

The LORD replied,
"If I find fifty innocent people in the city of Sodom,
I will spare the whole place for their sake." (gently but firmly) (short pause)

Abraham spoke up again: (very short pause)
"See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord,
though I am but dust and ashes! (humility, NOT self-serving)
(very short pause)
What if there are five less than fifty innocent people? (slightly faster pace)
Will you destroy the whole city because of those five?" (even a bit faster pace)

He answered,
"I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there." (gently but firmly) (short pause)

But Abraham persisted, saying,
"What if only forty are found there?" (Abraham quickens pace)

Proclaim the Word!

Proclamation format

He replied, "I will forbear doing it for the sake of the forty." (gently but firmly) (short pause)

Then Abraham said,

"Let not my Lord grow impatient if I go on.

(very short pause)

What if only thirty are found there?"

(a little hesitancy in voice)

He replied, "I will forbear doing it if I can find but thirty there." (gently but firmly) (short pause)

Still Abraham went on,

"Since I have thus dared to speak to my Lord,
what if there are no more than twenty?"

(Abraham is getting a bit worried)

(very short pause)

The LORD answered,

"I will not destroy it, for the sake of the twenty."

(gently but firmly) (short pause)

But he still persisted:

"Please, let not my Lord grow angry if I speak up this last time.

(not much confidence)

What if there are at least ten there?"

(almost disbelief! NOT relief)

He replied, "For the sake of those ten,
I will not destroy it."

(gently but firmly; slow down)

The word of the Lord.

17th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C

Reading 2

Citation: Colossians, Chap. 2, Verses 12-14
Colossians 2: 12-14

Paul's attempt to show the difference between "worldliness" and "spirituality." He also describes the role Jesus plays in making it possible to move from sin/death to righteousness/life. Take your time and let these ideas develop in the minds of your listeners.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians

Brothers and sisters: (get attention)

You were buried with him in baptism,
in which you were also raised with him
through faith in the power of God, (parenthetical)
who raised him from the dead. (be convinced!)

And even when you were dead
in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, (parenthetical)
he brought you to life along with him, (emphasize each word; end of sentence?)
having forgiven us all our transgressions; (treat as a new sentence)
obliterating the bond against us, (relief! confident)
with its legal claims, (parenthetical)
which was opposed to us, (somewhat parenthetical; voice goes down a bit)
he also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the cross. (confident; "nailling"?)

The word of the Lord.

17th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C

GOSPEL

Citation: Luke, Chap. 11, Verses 1-13
Luke 11: 1-13

The story of the Lord's Prayer. As you proclaim the prayer do so with as much feeling and understanding as you can muster – definitely contrast your proclamation from the "automatic" mode of prayer most of us fall into. In the justification of the prayer Jesus tells a brief story as a contrast to what God's attitude toward His creatures and their requests is. Again, bring the emotions strongly into play in your proclamation.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus was praying in a certain place, (very short pause)

and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him,

"Lord,

teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

(respectful request)

He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come.

("hallowed" = "holy")

(conviction)

Give us each day our daily bread

and forgive us our sins

for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,

and do not subject us to the final test."

(supplication)

(sorrowful supplication)

(humble justification)

(a bit fearful) (short pause)

And he said to them,

"Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight

and says,

'Friend,

lend me three loaves of bread,

for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey

and I have nothing to offer him,'

(this speech slightly faster)

(very short pause)

and he says in reply from within,

'Do not bother me;

the door has already been locked

and my children and I are already in bed.

I cannot get up to give you anything.'

(upset, almost angry!)

(short pause)

I tell you,

if he does not get up to give the visitor the loaves

because of their friendship,

he will get up to give him whatever he needs

because of his persistence.

(somewhat parenthetical)

(NOT parenthetical) (very short pause)

"And I tell you,

Proclaim the Word!

Proclamation format

ask and you will receive;
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks,
receives;
and the one who seeks,
finds;
and to the one who knocks,
the door will be opened.

(take your time this section)

What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish?
Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?

If you then,
who are wicked,
know how to give good gifts to your children,
how much more will the Father in heaven
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

(parenthetical)

The Gospel of the Lord.