

# TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8

Psalm 15:2-3, 3-4, 4-5

James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

## Gathering

*(An unlit candle, a Bible open to this week's gospel and a green plant rest on a cloth-covered table in the gathering place.)*

## Prayer

*(The leader invites the community to a time of silent attention to God's presence. After a period of quiet, the candle is lit and the prayer continues as follows.)*

Leader: Good and gracious God, may everything we do begin with the knowledge that all comes from you. Guide us in our daily actions, reflecting your love to those we meet. Give us the courage to allow your word to take hold of us that our actions reflect our desire to live your word fully.

All: Amen.

## HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

*(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.)*

*When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. Pausing between them, the leader then poses these two questions: "What draws you to this gospel?" "Where do you resist this gospel?" The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and*

*Questions for the week. After a time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)*

## Reflection

In this week's first scripture, the Deuteronomist tells us: "Now, hear the statutes and decrees which I am teaching you that you may live." From the letter of James we hear, "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves." And further along, we are urged "to keep oneself unstained by the world." Finally, Mark's gospel echoes the spirit of Deuteronomy, "Hear me, all of you and understand."

At times of deep questions in our faith lives, we might make this request of God: "Just tell me what to do and I will do it." I know I have felt that desperation at times and have said those words. But in God's word, we have what we need if we hear and understand.

In Deuteronomy, we are reminded through the Israelites and the covenant that we have been taught what is being asked of us. The covenant teaches how to live faithfully in a relationship with God.

In his letter, James offers the advice we need to live lives of Christian holiness. He reminds us that having received God's word, we need but act on it. Receive God's word, God's truth, in your heart and live from it, not the truth the world peddles.

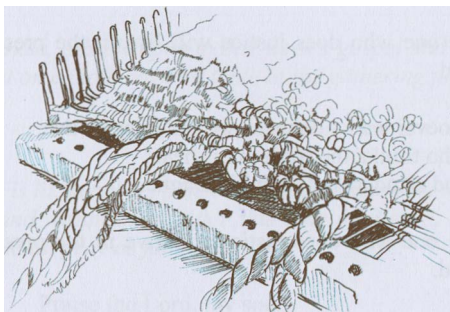
The gospel message builds on what James is saying: Follow the Lord from your heart, not just by your lips. Put in modern language we find in this week's scriptures, the answer to the question, "Just tell me what to do." It is simply this: If you're going to talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

- ◆ How deeply have you *heard* and *understood* God's word?
- ◆ Reflect on a time when you found yourself challenged not to just hear God's word, but to do it.
- ◆ When might you have been inclined to hang on more to human tradition than to God's commandment?

## HEARING THE GOSPEL'S LORD

*(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: "What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?" "How are you/we being called to live in response to God's word?" After a pause, the leader invites the community to a time of conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)*



### Response in Action Suggestions

- ◆ Set aside ten minutes each day this week for reflection and prayer. Ask yourself: What is it that is coming from my heart these days? Pray that you are ever more a *doer* of God's word than merely a *hearer*.
- ◆ Act this week to change the topic or at least disengage yourself in a situation of gossip.
- ◆ Learn about and support the work of the Children's Defense Fund. Check out the opportunities to volunteer ([www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)).

### Prayer

*(After a brief pause, the gospel or a portion of it, either of the other readings as appropriate or the responsorial psalm are proclaimed. The idea is to select a text that lends itself to inviting members to the time of silent prayer that follows. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: "What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?" "What*

*do you say to him in response?" The community pauses for a full five minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental selection may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two, or a brief expression that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally. The community receives this without additional comment.*

*Following this sharing, the leader, several members and all pray as follows.)*

Leader: The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

All: The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

I: Whoever walks blamelessly and does justice;  
who thinks the truth in his heart  
and slanders not with his tongue.

All: The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

II: Who harms not his fellow man,  
nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor;  
by whom the reprobate is despised,  
while he honors those who fear the LORD.

All: The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

III: Who lends not his money at usury  
and accepts no bribe against the innocent.  
Whoever does these things  
shall never be disturbed.

All: The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

Psalm 15:2-3, 3-4, 4-5

*(Members join in singing, "Here I Am, Lord," The song may be found on the Internet. When the song is complete, members exchange a sign of peace.)*