

Thoughts on the Readings of January 23, 2022

The Common Thread “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near” ([Rev 1:3](#)). Blessed are they who read the Word for others, and they who make the meaning clear. For that Word revives the soul and brings joy to the heart. It makes the simple wise and provides insight. This is a community affair; the whole congregation is involved: reading, teaching, hearing. In this ministry of the Word is found healing, liberty, understanding, and good news.

First Reading - [Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10](#) In some communities, an annual reading of the Bible is done on the steps of the courthouse or some other public place. Sometimes these are called Bible Reading Marathons. It takes about three days, round the clock or 72 hours, to read the entire Bible aloud. As many as a couple of hundred people sometimes show up for these marathons. In the marathon reading of the law written in Ezra, they not only read it loudly and clearly, they also gave the people the meaning as they read. All the people present paid close attention. Something similar happens in our services of worship today. Three lessons are read. The Psalm is read too, or intoned. The whole liturgy is also Scripture. In the midst of it all, the pastor gives the sense of the reading in the sermon. May all the people be attentive.

Psalm - [Psalm 19:1-6, 7-14](#) Even creation testifies to the glory of its creator. Jesus expresses the same idea when he says that if the people are silent, the stones would cry out ([Luke 19:40](#)). As the sun runs its course across the sky each day, the law of the Lord enlightens the minds of those who meditate in its perfection. Their souls are revived by God’s Word, just as the sun brings back the daylight.

Second Reading - [1 Corinthians 12:12-31a](#) God has appointed some people to be teachers in the Church. He has gifted them with the ability to instruct, particularly in providing “the sense” ([Neh 8:8](#)) of the Scriptures. As there are many gifts of the Spirit, there are many members of the Body of Christ. Each has a part to play, a service to perform for the common good in connection with their particular manifestation of the Spirit ([1 Cor 12:7](#)).

Gospel - [Luke 4:16-30](#) Verse 20 in our New Testament reading is strikingly connected to the Old Testament reading. Just as the ears of all of those listening to Ezra and others read from law were attentive, the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Jesus, the one who fulfilled both the law and the prophets ([Matt 5:17](#)).