

Baptism of the Lord (Cycle C)

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

This passage from the book of Isaiah begins with God calling the prophet to encourage the Jewish people exiled in Babylon. He is to tell them that they will be returning home soon, and the road of the return will pass through the desert. We will also hear God call the *people* to proclaim from a mountaintop the goodness of God.

Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

The letter to Titus was written about 30 years after Paul's death, and was written in Paul's name, a practice common in the ancient world. Titus was a traveling companion of Paul, and later was in charge of a Christian community on the island of Crete. The verses we are about to hear are also read at Masses on Christmas.

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C)

First Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5

The last part of the book of Isaiah contains the words of a prophet who lived after the Jews returned from exile in Babylon six centuries before Christ. Upon their return, they found their temple destroyed and the city of Jerusalem leveled. Still, the prophet sees a wonderful future for them because God loves them so much. Note the beautiful image he uses to describe that love.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Today, and for the next few weeks, our second reading will be from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Corinth was a busy cosmopolitan seaport located in the central part of modern-day Greece. Here, Paul addresses problems his converts are experiencing as they live a Christian life in this non-Christian environment.

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C)

First Reading: Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10

The book of Nehemiah recounts events which happened about 100 years after the Jewish people had returned from the Babylonian exile. After their initial religious fervor, the people's moral life and commitment to God's law had lapsed. So, Ezra the priest challenged the people to renew their commitment to the law, and conducted what would be called today a "religious revival".

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-30

Today we continue our reading from the first letter of Paul to the Christians in Corinth, an important seaport. He was answering a letter they had written to him, containing questions about Christian life in their community. Among the questions was how to deal with the diversity of gifts within the community, and the rivalries and jealousies that inevitably arise. He responds by using an image that the Catholic Church has particularly emphasized.

