

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

The godless say,  
“Let us lie in wait for the righteous one,  
who makes life inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;  
who reproaches us for sins against the law,  
and accuses us of sins against our training.  
Let us see if his words are true,  
and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;  
for if the righteous man is God’s son, God will help him,  
and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.  
Let us test him with insult and torture,  
so that we may find out how gentle he is,  
and make trial of his forbearance.  
Let us condemn him to a shameful death,  
for, according to what he says, he will be protected.”

adversaries = ADD-vuh-srees



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

A reading from the letter of Saint James.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Beloved:

Where there is envy and selfish ambition,  
there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind.

But the wisdom from above is first pure,  
then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield,  
full of mercy and good fruits,  
without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.

And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace  
for those who make peace.

Those conflicts and disputes among you,  
where do they come from?

Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?

You want something and do not have it;  
so you commit murder.

And you covet something and cannot obtain it;  
so you engage in disputes and conflicts.

You do not have, because you do not ask.

You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly,  
in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.

Pause for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – 25 B

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

*Glory to you, O Lord.*

After leaving the mountain,  
Jesus and his disciples went on from there  
and passed through Galilee.  
He did not want anyone to know it;  
for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them,  
“The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men,  
and they will kill him,  
and three days after being killed, he will rise again.”  
But they did not understand what he was saying  
and were afraid to ask him.  
Then they came to Capernaum;  
and when he was in the house he asked them,  
“What were you arguing about on the way?”  
But they were silent,  
for on the way they had argued with one another  
who was the greatest.  
Jesus sat down, called the twelve, and said to them,  
“Whoever wants to be first  
must be last of all and servant of all.”  
Then he took a little child and put it among them;  
and taking it in his arms, he said to them,  
“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me,  
and whoever welcomes me  
welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

### **Reading I: Wisdom 2:12, 17-20**

This figure in the Book of Wisdom shows close affinities with the righteous man of the psalms who is vindicated by God and with the suffering servant of Second Isaiah. In fact, verse 13, not used in this excerpt, actually calls the righteous sufferer God's *pais* ("son," though it could mean "servant").

The passage pictures the true Israelite, the tenor of whose life is a standing protest against the lawlessness of the ungodly (probably the apostate Jews of Alexandria), who are irritated by the silent protest of his life and conspire to kill him.

Because of the parallels between this picture and Christ's passion (though see also Plato's *Republic*, which says something similar with Socrates in view), this passage has come to be regarded as a prediction of the passion. (In the Book of Common Prayer it is one of the lessons appointed for Morning Prayer on Good Friday.)

It is perhaps a pity that the excerpt here stops short of the proclamation of God's vindication of his righteous servant (v. 22). It was obviously chosen to go with Mark's second prediction of the passion, which occurs in today's Gospel reading. That prediction speaks of vindication as well as suffering.

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### **Responsorial Psalm: 54:3-4, 5, 6, 8**

Psalm 54, which is appointed for Good Friday in the Book of Common Prayer, serves as a fitting response to the passage from the Book of Wisdom. The righteous person cries out to God for help against enemies and expresses confidence in divine vindication. For the Christian the psalm speaks of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and of every Christian from the grip of spiritual enemies.

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### **Reading II: James 3:16 - 4:3**

If we follow the division of the Letter of James according to the twelve patriarchs (see the twenty-second Sunday), we should make a rather different division here, treating 3:13-18 as a single exhortation revolving around the distinction between earthly and heavenly wisdom (Leah corresponding to earthly wisdom, and Rachel to heavenly wisdom), and 4:1-12 as an exhortation on false and true warfare (Gad).

So the first paragraph of today's reading will belong to the seventh exhortation, and the second paragraph to the eighth. But the two exhortations are linked by 3:18: those who follow heavenly wisdom will sow in a spirit of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

These words pave the way for the exhortation on the wrong warfare (the ensuing part about the true warfare comes in verse 7: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you"), but unfortunately it is not included here.

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### **Gospel: Mark 9:30-37**

The structure of this pericope is as remarkable as that of last Sunday's Gospel. First we have a prediction of the passion (the second of three in Mark), followed by an exhortation to live out the cross in Christian life.

Here this exhortation is expressed in terms of servanthood and humility. It is, of course, the evangelist himself, not historical reminiscence, that is responsible for the ordering of the material.

Mark is again polemicizing against the false teachers of his time, who understood Christ as a divine miracle-worker and themselves as his successors

Against this false Christology and false concept of ministry the evangelist sets the ideal of the suffering servant, of service and humility exemplified in the cross.

Reginald H. Fuller