

Joy and **light** are the words for these readings. Jesus Christ is the reason for **joy**. Jesus Christ reconciles the sinful Faithful to the Father through his suffering, death, and resurrection. Such is the context in which one God in three persons glorifies the Son.

Jeremiah 31:7-9

verse 7a Shout with **joy** for Jacob,
exult at the head of the *nations*.

verse 8a Behold, I will bring them back
from the land of the north

verse 9a They departed in tears ...

Jeremiah 31 contains is one of three covenants to which St. Paul gives significant recognition, though Paul does not think as much of this version of the covenant as of the other two. The other two covenants are with Abraham and the Mosaic covenant.¹

verse 9c For I am a father to Israel,
Ephraim is my first-born.

Ephraim is a child of Joseph, one of the tribes of Judah.²

Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 (3)

This is one of the few places the Lectionary uses a whole Psalm. The Lectionary uses this Psalm at three Sunday liturgies.

Readings	Page in Lectionary	Verses used
6C	30	1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 (3)
36C	229	1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 (3)
149B	921	1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 (3) The readings for today.

¹ Charles H. Talbert, "Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 2001) 16

² Merriam-Webster's Collegiate ® Dictionary: Tenth Edition (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1993), 389.

This is the first time the 126th Psalm appears in the Lectionary readings germane to these Notes.

The Order of Christian Funerals utilizes this Psalm at 13, 16 Antiphons and Psalms for use in various places within the rites. While verse 3 is the Responsorial for the Sundays, verse 6, modified as follows, is the Antiphon for the funeral rite. "Those who sow in tears shall sigh for **joy** when they reap."

Hebrews 5:1-6

Hebrews reinterprets Jeremiah to identify Jesus as God and the Messiah, bringing the nations with Israel into the very love of God. That is why the Psalmist proclaims in the Responsorial, "The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with **joy**." There is a priesthood of the Faithful that fits the notion, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." The priesthood of the Faithful consists in self-sacrifice in addition to and apart from the priesthood of Holy Orders that adds the mystical sacrifice of the Mass in a special relationship to the sacraments of the Church. A priest due to receiving the sacrament of Holy Orders is the only one able to minister five of the seven sacraments: Holy Orders, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, and the Eucharist. The priest witnesses the couple administering marriage to themselves. Anyone may validly baptize.

verse 5a it was not Christ who glorified himself in becoming high priest

Cf. 2 Timothy 1:10

Our Savior Jesus Christ destroyed death
And brought life to **light** through the Gospel.

Mark 10:46-52

Matthew 20:29-34 and 8:10b, neither of which is used in the Sunday Lectionary, rearranges these Marcan verses. Matthew follows Mark "with a fair degree of consistency in 20:29-34, but drastically recasts it in 9:27-31."³ New Jerusalem does not mention 9:27-31 in the marginalia. 9:27 is about two blind men, rather than one. In 9:30, Jesus tells the men not to tell anyone. There is nothing in 9:27-31 about *again*.

verse 51 Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?"
The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see."

³ Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Observations on the 'Miracle Chapters' of Mathew 8-9," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October 1978) 560, footnote 4.

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The grammarian points out that the meaning is to see *again*. This *again* has special meaning for Jeremiah.

The Vulgate (circa 410): ut videam.”

Douay-Rheims (1582-1610): that I may see.”

King James (1611): that I might receive my sight.

Jerusalem (1966): let me see again.”

New American (1970): I want to see.”

New Jerusalem (1985): let me see again.”

Again also has special meaning for blindness; there is a big difference in comprehension between one never having seen and one who lost sight.

verse 52a Jesus told him, “Go your way; your faith has saved you.”

According to the back title page, the translation from the Sunday Sermons was published between 1955 and 1966 without copyright date. The copyright for the book I use is 1996, material I am not copying. All of the quoted material below is from the Sunday Sermons for Quinquagesima Sunday.

Saint Cyril (of Alexandria + 444 or of Jerusalem 318-386) explains:

There were many people around Jesus, and the blind man had not known Him, but he felt His presence, and laid hold of Him with his heart whom his eye could not see: and so there follows: *And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant.* And those who could see were speaking of Him according to common report; for there follows: *And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.* But the blind man cried out that which was true. Told one thing, he proclaims another: *And he cried, saying: Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me.* Who has taught you to speak thus, O man? Have you, though deprived of sight, read the Scriptures? How have you discerned the **Light** of the world? Truly *the Lord enlighteneth the blind* (Psalm 145:8)

Saint John Chrysostom (354-407) wrote,

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Let us then be humble, that we may be exalted. For arrogance lowers us completely. It was pride cast Pharaoh [sic] down: *Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord*, he says; and then he was made lower than the flies and frogs and locusts; and afterwards was drowned with all his horses and armies. But Abraham was the opposite of this: *I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes* (Ex. V. 2; Gen. 18:27), and he overcame many thousands of barbarians, and being come into the midst of the Egyptians, he returned, bearing a more glorious trophy than before, and remaining steadfast in virtue was raised even higher.

The following, from an unknown author. is incorrectly attributed to Chrysostom:

Was the favor bestowed, then [sic] grace preceded it. And as the fountain is one, yet many draw from the fountain: this one with a little vessel, this other with a larger; the first draws but little water, the second draws much; and it is not the fountain that determines the measure of the water drawn forth; for each draws according to the capacity of his vessel. So grace is placed before us as a fountain.

The following from Saint Augustine (354-430) is lengthy, thus inspiring my copyright comments above, but inspirational especially for Poor Clare **light**.

Love God. You will not find anything more worthy of love. You love silver, because it is more precious than iron or bronze. You love gold still more, because it is more precious than silver. Still more precious stones, for they are prized above gold. Last, you love this **light**; which all who dread death fear to leave. You love **light**, I say, as he loved it, with deep longing, who cried to Jesus: *Son of David, have mercy on me*.

The blind man cries out, as Jesus was passing by. He heard He might pass by, and not heal him. And how earnestly he cried? Though the crowd rebuked him, he would not be silent. He overcame his rebukers [sic], and held our Savior. While the crowd clamored against him, and forbade him cry out, Jesus stands, and called him, and said: *What wilt thou that I do to thee? Lord, he said, that I may see. Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole*.

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Love Christ: Seek ye the **light** that is Christ. If he longed for the **light** of the body, how much the more ought you to long for the **light** of the soul? Let us cry out to Him, not with words, but with virtuous living. Let us love in virtue, and esteem not the world: all that is transitory to us is nothing. They will rebuke us should we live as worthy men, and lovers of ourselves, and lovers of the earth, **delighting** in the games, drawing nothing from heaven, unbridled in heart, and resting all **delights**: they will, and without any doubt, rebuke us; and should they see us despise what is human, what is earthly, they will say: why do you wish to suffer? Why are you foolish?

The crowd clamors, that the blind man shall not cry out. There are not a few Christians who seek to hinder us from living as Christians: like the crowd that walked with Christ, and hindered the man crying out to Christ, and hungering for kindness of Christ. There are such Christians: but let us overcome them, and live in virtue: and our life shall be the voice of our cry to Christ. He will stand; because He stands.

For here is a great mystery. He was passing by when this man began to cry out: when He healed him He stood still. Let Christ's passing by make us prepared to cry out. What is Christ's passing by? Whatsoever He has endured for us here is His passing by. He was born, He passed by: for is He yet being born? He grew up, He passed by: is He yet growing up? He was suckled: is He yet suckled? When weary He slept: does He yet sleep? He ate and He drank: does He yet do this? At the last he was seized, He was bound with ropes, He was beaten, He was crowned with thorns, He was struck by blows, He was defiled with spittle, He was hung on a cross, He was put to death, He was pierced by a lance, He was buried, He rose again. Till then He passes by.

Standing still, below comes from *stopped* in the Lectionary.

Verse 49a Jesus *stopped* and said, "Call him."

He ascended into heaven, He sits at the right hand of the Father: He stands still. Cry out all you can: now He will give thee **light**. For that in Him the *Word was with God*. He has

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of a surety stood still; since He was not changed. And *the Word was God: and the Word was made Flesh*. The Flesh has wrought many things through passing by, and suffered many. The Word has stood still. By this Word the soul is en**lightened**; as by this Word the flesh which He took on is adorned. Take away the Word, what then of the flesh? It is as yours. That the flesh of Christ be honored, *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us*, let us live virtuously, and so cry out to Him.

In a sermon on steadfastness in prayer, St. Gregory (540-603) observes:

This crowd torments us, lest we cry out: for it is generally in prayer that we have to suffer the images of our former sins. But it is necessary that the more they oppose the cry of our heart, the more courageously let it be steadfast, until it has overcome the tumult of the evil thoughts, and broken upon the sacred ears of the Lord by the force of its importunity.

...

Let us seek from the Lord, not deceiving riches, not earthly gifts, not fleeting honors, but **light**. And not that **light** which may be enclosed in space, and is measured by time, and changes with the coming of night, and which is enjoyed in common by sheep and men; but let us seek for the **light** that we and the angels alone may see; which no beginning commences, and no end encloses. To this **light** the way is through faith alone. Fittingly then does He answer the man who is now about to be given sight: *Receive thy sight, thy faith hath made thee whole*.

Jeremiah dares to proclaim **joy** in the midst of the Exile. Upon the return from the Exile, the disheveled Jews are reminded that “The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with **joy**.” Hebrews explains, as Father Peter likes to put it, *Per crucem ad lucem*. The way to the **light** is through the cross. Healing the blind man was a step in the *per crucem ad lucem* realization.

For sources, see the Appendix file.