

# PENTECOST SUNDAY

At the VIGIL Mass

Year A-B-C

These readings are used at Saturday Evening Mass  
celebrated either before or after Evening Prayer I of Pentecost Sunday.

## There is a choice between four (4) 1<sup>st</sup> Readings

The reading from Genesis is pure storytelling. You are trying to explain why so many different kinds of people and languages exist given that all humans came from Adam and Eve. Further, you also are defending the heritage of your own people as God's people. There is a need for changing voice tones from one "speaker" to another. At the close of the passage your tone must reflect that you are the wise man advising your listeners (not an "I-told-you-so" attitude).

Reading 1  
**Option #1**

*Citation:* Genesis, Chap. 11, Verses 1-9  
Genesis 11: 1-9

### A reading from the Book of Genesis

The whole world spoke the same language, using the same words. (short pause)

While the people were migrating in the east, (almost wistful?)  
they came upon a valley  
in the land of Shinar (parenthetical ?)  
and settled there. (very short pause)

They said to one another, (be enthusiastic proclaiming the speech!)  
"Come,  
let us mold bricks and harden them with fire."  
They used bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar. (very short pause)  
(almost parenthetical)

Then they said, (enthusiastic)  
"Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky,  
and so make a name for ourselves;  
otherwise  
we shall be scattered all over the earth." (sense of foreboding?) (pause)

The LORD came down  
to see the city and the tower that the people had built. (very short pause)

Then the LORD said: (God is practical, not angry)  
"If now, while they are one people,  
all speaking the same language,  
they have started to do this, (almost parenthetical)  
nothing will later stop them (increasing concern?)  
from doing whatever they presume to do.  
Let us then go down there and confuse their language, (determination)  
so that one will not understand what another says." (pause)

## Proclamation Format

Thus  
the LORD scattered them from there  
all over the earth,  
and they stopped building the city.

(each word separately)  
(short pause)

That is why it was called Babel,  
because there the LORD confused the speech of all the world.  
It was from that place that he scattered them all over the earth.

(very short pause)  
(last 4 words separately; sadly?)

**The word of the Lord.**

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Year A-B-C

The Exodus reading describes events just before God gives Moses the 10 Commandments. They had left Egypt three months before this and reached the desert of Sinai and “the mountain of God.” You must be God, when He speaks, as well as the Jewish storyteller preparing his listeners for the story of the 10 Commandments. Setting the stage, you are cautioning your listeners regarding how they are to conduct themselves in God’s presence and, ultimately, as his chosen people. There are dramatic occurrences in the scene to show God’s power and majesty as well as the fear the people felt. Take your time with the proclamation. Let the significance of what is being described sink into your listeners’ minds; help them to “see” the picture!

Reading 1  
Option #2

Citation: Exodus, Chap. 19, Verses 3-8a, 16-20b  
Exodus 19: 2-8a, 16-20b

### A reading from the Book of Exodus

Moses went up the mountain to God. (short pause)

Then  
the LORD called to him and said,  
"Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob;  
tell the Israelites: (very short pause)

You have seen for yourselves how I treated the Egyptians  
and how I bore you up on eagle wings  
and brought you here to myself. (confident)  
(more confidence)  
(even more confidence!)  
Therefore,  
if you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, (drag out “hearken” and “keep” a bit)  
you shall be my special possession, (firm promise)  
dearer to me than all other people, (warmly sincere)  
though all the earth is mine. (parenthetical)  
You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, (urgent)  
a holy nation. (urgent satisfaction) (very short pause)  
That is what you must tell the Israelites." (short pause)

So Moses went and summoned the elders of the people (very short pause)

When he set before them  
all that the LORD had ordered him to tell them,  
the people all answered together, (very short pause)

"Everything the LORD has said, we will do." (a bit louder)

On the morning of the third day  
there were peals of thunder and lightning, (back to storytelling)  
and a heavy cloud over the mountain, (Wow!)  
and a very loud trumpet blast, (ominous?)  
so that all the people in the camp trembled. (drag our “blast” ?)  
(very short pause)

## Proclamation Format

But Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God,  
and they stationed themselves at the foot of the mountain.

(assuring)

(short pause)

Mount Sinai was all wrapped in smoke,  
for the LORD came down upon it in fire.  
The smoke rose from it as though from a furnace,  
and the whole mountain trembled violently.

(surprise ?)

(Wow ?)

The trumpet blast grew louder and louder, while Moses was speaking,  
and God answering him with thunder.

(2<sup>nd</sup> “louder” is louder)

(pause)

When the LORD came down to the top of Mount Sinai,  
he summoned Moses to the top of the mountain.

(quiet? reassuring?)

## The word of the Lord.

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Year A-B-C

Think of the Negro Spiritual, “Dry Bones,” as you prepare to proclaim this reading. Hear the rhythm and beat of the music and lyrics. The song re-presents the plight of American Negroes and there unceasing hope that, with God, their plight would be relieved. Not much different from the feelings many of us have in our modern day of materialism, “me too”-ism, etc. The song should help you pace yourself through this long reading. You are definitely telling the story, here. There are amazing things that happen and your voice tone needs to reflect them. Your task is to vividly help your listeners “see” what happens and come to the realization of the power of the Spirit in their lives. Although long, it is a gripping story so don’t be afraid to take your time; it is too important a story to rush through.

Reading 1  
**Option #3**

*Citation:* Ezekiel, Chap. 37, Verses 1-14  
Ezekiel 37:1-14

## A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

The hand of the LORD came upon me,  
and he led me out in the spirit of the LORD  
and set me in the center of the plain, (very short pause)  
which was now filled  
with bones. (short pause)

He made me walk among the bones  
in every direction  
so that I saw how many they were on the surface of the plain. (slower, this sentence)

How dry they were! (some amazement) (short pause)

He asked me:  
Son of man,  
can these bones come to life? (an announcement!)  
(very short pause)

I answered,  
"Lord GOD, you alone know that." (tone of caution?)

Then he said to me:  
Prophesy over these bones, and say to them: (long “i” for the “y”) (insistent)

Dry bones,  
hear the word of the LORD! (Raise volume a bit)  
( “ “

Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones:  
See! I will bring spirit into you, (slightly quieter)  
(as much feeling as you can muster – rest of this section!)

that you may come to life.  
I will put sinews upon you, (each phrase is separate)

make flesh grow over you,  
cover you with skin,  
and put spirit in you (very short pause)

## Proclamation Format

so that you may come to life  
and know that I am the LORD.

(emphatic)

I,  
Ezekiel,  
prophesied as I had been told,  
and even as I was prophesying I heard a noise;  
it was a rattling as the bones came together,  
bone joining bone.  
I saw the sinews and the flesh come upon them,  
and the skin cover them,  
but there was no spirit in them.

(quietly but with astonishment!)

(very short pause)

(each word separately)

[excitement builds!]

(short pause)

(very short pause)

Then the LORD said to me:  
Prophecy to the spirit, prophecy, son of man,  
and say to the spirit:

(mounting insistence)

Thus says the Lord GOD:  
From the four winds come, O spirit,  
and breathe into these slain  
that they may come to life.

(slower - both lines)

(short pause)

I prophesied as he told me,  
and the spirit came into them;  
they came alive  
and stood upright,  
a vast army.

(mounting amazement!)

(short pause)

Then he said to me:  
Son of man,  
these bones are the whole house of Israel.  
They have been saying:  
"Our bones are dried up,  
our hope is lost,  
and we are cut off."

(an announcement)

(note of despair in voice)

( " " )  
( " " )

Therefore,  
prophecy  
and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD:  
O my people,  
I will open your graves  
and have you rise from them,  
and bring you back to the land of Israel.  
Then you shall know that I am the LORD,  
when I open your graves and have you rise from them,

(very short pause)

(beseeching)

O my people!  
I will put my spirit in you that you may live,  
and I will settle you upon your land;  
thus you shall know that I am the LORD.

[note the format change] (again – beseeching)

(very short pause)

**Proclamation Format**

I have promised,  
and I will do it,  
says the LORD.

(firm; voice goes up)  
(volume up a bit; each word separately)

**The word of the Lord.**

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The reading from Joel looks toward the “end days” when God’s kingdom is established. The Spirit will be active, particularly among His “chosen” people. This is both a reading filled with dread as well as with Hope. Those who chose to follow God’s Will are destined to be vindicated while those who choose otherwise will be lost. Choose to be a person of Hope and let that choice come through in your proclamation.

Reading 1  
**Option #4**

*Citation:* Joel, Chap. 3, Verses 1-5  
Joel 3: 1-5

## A reading from the Book of the Prophet Joel

Thus says the LORD:

I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.

(very short pause)

Your sons and daughters shall prophesy,

(each phrase stands alone)

your old men shall dream dreams,

your young men shall see visions;

even upon the servants and the handmaids,

(very positive)

in those days,

I will pour out my spirit.

(short pause)

And I will work wonders in the heavens

and on the earth,

(very short pause)

blood,

fire,

and columns of smoke;

(very short pause)

the sun will be turned to darkness,

and the moon to blood, at the coming of the day of the LORD,

(very short pause)

the great and terrible day.

(NOT parenthetical)

Then everyone shall be rescued

who calls on the name of the LORD;

(NOT parenthetical)

for on Mount Zion there shall be a remnant,

(positive; affirmative)

as the LORD has said,

(parenthetical)

and in Jerusalem

(voice goes up)

survivors whom the LORD shall call.

(firm; convinced)

**The word of the Lord.**

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Paul urges his congregation in Rome to be patient – to cultivate Hope. The return of Jesus had been expected almost immediately but it is now years after Christ’s resurrection and ascension. The presence of the Spirit in their lives is “proof” – as far as Paul is concerned – that Christ’s promise to return will be fulfilled. He is convinced that by prayer this Hope they need will grow in them and permit them to live their lives each day as examples of Christ’s teachings. Your voice-tone should be positive, upbeat, and reflect your conviction in the truth of the Resurrection. Take your time and use variety in your tone of voice to help your listeners “see” this Hope in their own lives.

Reading 2

*Citation:* Romans, Chap. 8, Verses 22-27  
Romans 8: 22-27

## A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; (drag out “groaning” a bit)  
and not only that, (insistent)  
but we ourselves, (parenthetical)  
who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,  
we also groan within ourselves  
as we wait for adoption,  
the redemption of our bodies. (parenthetical)  
For in hope we were saved. (short pause)

Now hope that sees is not hope. (very short pause)  
For who hopes for what one sees? (almost parenthetical?)  
But if we hope for what we do not see,  
we wait with endurance. (full confidence) (very short pause)

In the same way,  
the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness;  
for we do not know how to pray as we ought, (almost parenthetical)  
but the Spirit himself intercedes  
with inexpressible groanings. (very short pause)

And the one who searches hearts (slight questioning tone?)  
knows what is the intention of the Spirit,  
because he intercedes for the holy ones  
according to God's will. (almost parenthetical)

**The word of the Lord.**

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This event takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles which commemorated the struggles of the Hebrews in the desert after their deliverance from Egypt. Jesus refers to the water that God miraculously made available to the Hebrews from the rock in the desert. John moves the symbolism to follow Christ's resurrection. John is merely cautioning his community that Christ has foretold what would happen after His resurrection. John is both telling the story of the event and trying to convey its significance. Be the storyteller.

GOSPEL

*Citation:* John, Chap. 7, Verses 37-39  
John 7:37-39

## A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

On the last and greatest day of the feast,  
Jesus stood up and exclaimed,  
"Let anyone who thirsts  
come to me and drink.

(very short pause)

As Scripture says:  
Rivers of living water will flow from within him  
who believes in me."

(change voice tone – Christ sounds like?)

He said this in reference to the Spirit  
that those who came to believe in him were to receive.

(almost parenthetical)  
( “ “

There was,  
of course,  
no Spirit yet,  
because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

(parenthetical)

(an affirmation of fact)

**The Gospel of the Lord.**