

## About the Readings on Sept. 29, 2024

\*\*\*Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)

### Sunday, September 25–October 1

#### Lectionary 26

Standard Sundays continue with the proclamation of the second half of Mark's gospel.

#### [Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29](#) ([Numbers 11:4-29](#))

The narrative from Numbers has been joined with Mark 9 because both share the conviction that God's Spirit is shared by the many rather than by the few. Thus the Numbers reading places the focus of the gospel reading on verse 40. The Israelite nomads have certainly been salted with fire. Christians believe that in baptism all the members of the body of Christ receive the Spirit of God.

#### [The Psalm for the Day](#)

Having heard the story of the complaining Israelites and the commotion effected by Eldad and Medad, we join together to sing [Psalm 19:7-14](#). This second half of the psalm praises the ways of God, which, like the Israelites, we disobey and misconstrue. Even if all we have to eat is manna, we honor the judgments of the Lord as better than honey.

#### [James 5:13-20](#)

The passage from James impels us to examine our practice of prayer, which here is focused on communal healing, not on personal situations. The Elijah reference reflects early monotheistic beliefs, according to which any cosmic event, even weather, is produced directly by God.

#### [Mark 9:38-50](#)

The extreme admonitions in this passage capture the metaphoric nature of Jesus' preaching. Although later Christians saw this passage as about eternal punishment in hell, it is unlikely that Mark's community had any such medieval understanding of "Gehenna." In our baptism, we do "bear the name of Christ" and have been salted with God's Spirit. The passage includes an admonition for Christians to cease competition with each other. The stark passage concludes with a blessing of Christ's peace.

