

August 17th, 2025 Lectionary Notes

The Readings on This Day

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

Sunday, August 14–20

Lectionary 20



Over the last weeks we have encountered lots of forgiveness in Luke’s gospel. This Sunday we hear that God’s mercy has a sharp edge, as if in-laws were at each other’s throats.

[Jeremiah 23:23-29](#)

This selection from Jeremiah is set next to Luke 12 to emphasize that God’s word has always been unpopular and a challenge to the culture. The human phenomenon of religion is characterized by pleasant dreams that may be far distant from the message of God’s word. Both Jeremiah and Luke describe the word of God as fire.

[The Psalm for the Day](#)

Having heard Jeremiah proclaim the fire of God’s word, we respond by joining together in [Psalm 82](#), which begs God to save the weak and to end the power of the wicked. The psalm’s setting imagines God as presiding over a counsel of gods and goddesses, who unjustly favor those who are evil, but who will eventually die like mortals. It is an image of Götterdämmerung, the power of the gods destroyed because they have not maintained justice.

[Hebrews 11:19—12:2](#)

Also in the twenty-first century some Christians are tormented, persecuted, and killed for their faith. We trust that Jesus, who in faith endured the cross, will enable us to finish the race of life faithful to God. And if we have no such agonies in our lives, we stand with those Christians who do.

[Luke 12:49-56](#)

Luke writes that faithfulness to Christ and to the community of the baptized is likely to be countercultural, unpopular, even divisive. Much in current Christianity emphasizes instead the open inclusiveness of the church and its commitment to peace. This gospel reading reminds us that frequently, a statement about Christianity needs to be held together with its opposite. Next to the dove of peace is the sword of the word.