

For meditation and context:

TO KEEP IN MIND

The responsorial psalm "has great liturgical and pastoral importance, since it fosters meditation on the Word of God," the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says. Pray it as you prepare.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 95.1-2, 6-7ab, 7c-9 (R.7c+8a)

**R. O that today you would listen to the voice of the Lord.
Do not harden your hearts!**

O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock
of our salvation!

Let us come into his presence
with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with
songs of praise!

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For he is our God, and we are the people
of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,
when your ancestors tested me,
and put me to the proof,
though they had seen my work.

READING II 2 Timothy 1.6-8, 13-14

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy.

Beloved:

I remind you to rekindle the gift of God
that is within you through the laying on of my hands,
for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice,
but rather a spirit of power
and of love and of self-discipline.

Do not be ashamed, then,
of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner,
but join with me in suffering for the Gospel,
relying on the power of God.

Hold to the standard of sound teaching
that you have heard from me,
in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.
Guard the good treasure entrusted to you,
with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

An exhortatory reading from St. Paul to his disciple Timothy that is laced with intimate encouragement.

cowardice = KOW-ehr-dihs

Paul uses the rhetorical device of setting up his encouragement by stating something in the negative. Emphasis on "Do not."

With "Hold," Paul really moves to reinforce his encouragement. Emphasis on "living in us."

READING II In the verse that precedes this reading, Paul expresses his confidence that the faith that dwelt in Timothy's grandmother Lois and in his mother, Eunice, now dwells in Timothy. Timothy, however, needs to live this faith more resolutely. He needs to "rekindle the gift [Greek *charisma*] of God," that is, the unique talents he received when Paul laid hands on him. To bear witness to the Lord effectively, Timothy must practise and develop pastoral skills.

The main gift that Timothy (and every baptized person) received is the Holy Spirit. This is not a spineless or fainthearted spirit, but rather a spirit of power (Greek *dunamis*, from which derive the English words "dynamite," "dynamic"). The imprisoned, Spirit-filled Paul is Timothy's model. This intrepid Apostle was never embarrassed to speak out. He never hesitated to counter the world's beliefs and opinions with the sound words of the Gospel. His courage, love, and self-discipline in the face of harsh treatment and countless dangers both validated his teaching and persuaded many to live for

the Lord alone. Now it is Timothy's time to "join with [Paul] in suffering for the Gospel," relying on the strength (*dunamis*) that comes from God.