

Zion = Zi-uhn or Zi-ahn

TO KEEP IN MIND

Smile when you share good news.
Nonverbal cues like a smile help the assembly understand the reading.

For meditation and context:

The tone of this reading is gentle.

Note the repetitions of "patient."

The tone becomes firmer in the second half of the reading; allow your proclamation to reflect this shift.

READING II Scholars liken the reading to wisdom literature as it contains a variety of loosely connected

moral exhortations. Much of the material bears a great similarity to the sayings of Jesus found in Matthew and Luke that are attributed to the Q source. The bulk of these exhortations are oriented to turning people away from the ways of the world to seek the wisdom of heaven, where injustice and poverty have no home.

The word "patient" occurs three times in today's short excerpt from the letter. The author exhorts his audience to have the patience of a farmer who has great expectations for the sprouting and growth of the seeds that he has planted. The patience

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 146.6c-7, 8-9a, 9b-10 (R. see Isa 35.4)

R. Lord, come and save us.

or: Alleluia!

It is the Lord who keeps faith forever,
who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets the prisoners free.

The Lord upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

The Lord opens the eyes of the blind
and lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous
and watches over the strangers.

READING II James 5.7-10

A reading from the Letter of Saint James.

**Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord.
The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth,
being patient with it until it receives the early
and the late rains.**

You also must be patient.

**Strengthen your hearts,
for the coming of the Lord is near.**

**Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another,
so that you may not be judged.**

See, the Judge is standing at the doors!

**As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters,
take the Prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.**

James calls for is not mere waiting but is a sort of hopeful yearning. There is much hope that the wait will be worth all that is to come. James encourages those who wait patiently to make firm their hearts. Thus, they are not to be distracted by other alluring forces of this world that may draw their attention away from the Lord's return, which "is near."

In a state of expectant waiting, it is possible that someone could become impatient with and cast judgment upon those uninterested in waiting. James cautions against the temptation to complain about

others. Instead, those who await the Lord's return should look to the example provided by the Prophets. The suffering and the hardship of those who attend to the Lord will witness to a world redeemed and living in the justice of God.

GOSPEL

The animated discussion between the disciples of John the Baptist and Jesus embodies the early Church's struggle to understand the nature of Jesus as the Messiah. The disciples of John were concerned with the dawning of God's kingdom and wanted to