

Second Reading

For centuries the Roman Liturgy used the word “epistle” to designate the reading which preceded the Gospel, even when this reading did not come from a New Testament letter. In the East, however, the reading before the Gospel was simply called “the Apostle,” a designation suitable for all the books of the New Testament that come down to us from the Church of the Apostles.

Today a New Testament text is always given as the second reading on Sundays and Solemnities. Although the choice of the text can be made independent of the first reading or the Gospel, during certain liturgical seasons, such as Advent or Easter, the text is selected to correspond to the mystery being celebrated.