



## Gospel Acclamation See Lk 4:18

*Alleluia, alleluia!*

*The Lord sent me to bring Good News to the poor and freedom to prisoners.*

*Alleluia!*

## Gospel Lk 1:1-4, 4:14-21

*The scriptures were fulfilled on this day.*

Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him.

He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.'

## Reflection by Greg Sunter

This week marks the beginning of the liturgical use of the gospel of Luke that will feature throughout this year. The choice of passage to begin our journey with Luke is most appropriate. We have the first four verses of the gospel in which the writer makes his purpose clear. We then skip over all the infancy narrative and pick up again in chapter 4 of the gospel where Jesus makes his first public appearance.

Jesus returns to the synagogue in which he has worshipped all his life. He is given the scroll of Isaiah to read and reads the first two verses of Isaiah, chapter 61. But in the middle of this passage he flips back to chapter 58 of Isaiah and reads an additional line, 'to set the downtrodden (oppressed) free'. This event in Nazareth is sometimes referred to as Jesus' inauguration or declaration of mission. The inclusion of the additional verse from Isaiah signals very clearly the way in which Jesus will be portrayed throughout this particular gospel. The gospel of Luke is characterised by the focus of Jesus' mission on the outcast; the oppressed; the downtrodden.

The gospel of Luke is often described as a gospel of compassion. Throughout the gospel we see Jesus enact the verses from Isaiah – bringing good news to the lowliest of society; inviting the least to share in the reign of God. In fact, having read from the scripture, Jesus' very simple homily on the text is 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen'. Jesus declares himself to be acting out and fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. This short extract from Isaiah that Jesus adopted as his own 'mission statement' is indeed a mission statement for all Christian people. This is what we too are called to do.

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# The Living Word

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

23 January 2022

## First Reading Neh 8:2-6, 8-10

*They read from the book of Law and they understood what was read.*

Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, consisting of men, women, and children old enough to understand. This was the first day of the seventh month. On the square before the Water Gate, in the presence of the men and women, and children old enough to understand, he read from the book from early morning till noon; all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden dais erected for the purpose. In full view of all the people – since he stood higher than all the people – Ezra opened the book; and when he opened it all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people raised their hands and answered Amen! Amen!; then they bowed down and, face to the ground, prostrated themselves before the Lord. And Ezra read from the Law of God, translating and giving the sense, so that the people understood what was read.

Then Nehemiah – His Excellency – and Ezra, priest and scribe (and the Levites who were instructing the people) said to all the people, 'This day is sacred to the Lord your God. Do not be mournful, do not weep'. For the people were all in tears as they listened to the words of the Law. He then said, 'Go, eat the fat, drink the sweet wine, and send a portion to the man who has nothing prepared ready. For this day is sacred to our Lord. Do not be sad: the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.'

## Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 18:8-10. 15. R. See Jn 6:63**

**(R.) Your words, Lord, are spirit and life.**

1. The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul.  
The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple. (R.)
2. The precepts of the Lord are right, they gladden the heart.  
The command of the Lord is clear, it gives light to the eyes. (R.)
3. The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever.  
The decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just. (R.)

4. May the spoken words of my mouth, the thoughts of my heart, win favour in your sight, O Lord, my rescuer, my rock! (R.)

## Second Reading 1 Cor 12:12-30 or 1 Cor 12:12-14, 27 (shorter form)

*Together you are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it.*

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. If the foot were to say, 'I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body', would that mean that it stopped being part of the body? If the ear were to say, 'I am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the body', would that mean that it is not a part of the body? If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is, the parts are many but the body is one. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you,' nor can the head say to the feet, 'I do not need you.'

What is more, it is precisely the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest which are the indispensable ones; and it is the least honourable parts of the body that we clothe with the greatest care. So our more improper parts get decorated in a way that our more proper parts do not need. God has arranged the body so that more dignity is given to the parts which are without it, and so that there may not be disagreements inside the body, but that each part may be equally concerned for all the others. If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.

Now you together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it. In the Church, God has given the first place to apostles, the second to prophets, the third to teachers; after them, miracles, and after them the gift of healing; helpers, good leaders, those with many languages. Are all of them apostles, or all of them prophets, or all of them teachers? Do they all have the gift of miracles, or all have the gift of healing? Do all speak strange languages, and all interpret them?