

RECOVER YOUR VISION!

(LUKE 1:1-4; 4:14-21)



We begin today our reading of the Gospel of Luke, our Gospel text for this season of "Ordinary Time".

Luke opens his account with a dedication to his patron, Theophilus, with an explanation of his reasons for embarking on a work which others – in his view, unsatisfactorily – had done before him. He stresses the research he had done on the sources from "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word", thus assuring his readers that the material he is presenting is reliable, but better ordered than those others currently available at his time of writing.

Our extract then passes to the outset of Jesus' ministry, carried out in "the power of the Spirit", a recurrent theme in Luke's version. He situates Jesus very much in the tradition of the Israelite prophets by presenting him as quoting from the prophet Isaiah when announcing his programme in the synagogue at Nazareth. The focal point of this scene is the line "to the blind new sight". The theme of seeing is important in Luke's Gospel, so we should be aware of that and all related terms, such as blindness. It is interesting that the evangelist talks about restoring sight to blind people: we might remember when listening to the Gospel extracts that Jesus is giving back vision to people who have lost it, rather than granting sight to people born without it. ■

REFLECT

Jesus' programme for his ministry is set very much in terms of liberation; his message is one of good news. He announces a jubilee year, one during which sin is forgiven, debts are cancelled and people are given the chance of a new start. At the heart of this mission is recovery of vision which has been lost, not necessarily through bad will but just through the daily round of ordinary life. We can become absorbed in the cares and worries of life and thoughts of faith and our relationship with God can be pushed to the back of our mind.

That is why our weekly celebration of the Eucharist is so important: it keeps our vision clear and reminds us of the person we would like to be and are trying to become.

Many people say that Luke's version is their favourite Gospel. His picture of Jesus is gentle and accepting. At the same time, Luke is clear about the danger of wealth, that it can be an obstacle to being a disciple of Jesus. We know that we cannot survive without money and shelter, but Luke is asking us to keep a sense of proportion, to ask ourselves what is really important in our lives.

Perhaps the passage from Isaiah is telling us that our faith should be freeing, liberating and not a burden. There is a saying that "wherever the sea is, there is the taste of salt: wherever there is truth, there is the taste of freedom". As we consider the heart of Jesus' message being restoring "to the blind new sight", we might keep that in mind. ■

SAY

Wherever there is the sea, there is the taste of salt: wherever there is truth, there is the taste of freedom.

(Quote from Thought for the Day)

LEARN

Luke had access to the Gospel of Mark when writing his own account.

The central line of the section about Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth is "to the blind new sight".

This is a key idea in Luke's account, along with that of the Spirit.



DO

Take a good look around you: thank God for the gift of sight; think how your vision of faith and life might be restored – then ask for that!

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good
pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works...
Amen.

FIRST READING Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10

A reading from the book of Nehemiah.

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 to 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."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 18

Response:

Your words are spirit, Lord,
and they are 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 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27

Long form 2 Corinthians 12:12-30

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

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 of its many parts.

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

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Lord has sent me to bring the good
news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

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 eye witnesses 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 he 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 down-trodden 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the
Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver
of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic
Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray,
and in sanctifying them
grant that they may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Look toward the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, receiving the grace
by which you bring us to new life,
we may always glory in your gift.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.