

# Sunday Message

3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 26 January 2025 • Psalter Week 3

## START SPREADING THE (GOOD) NEWS

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



It's no wonder his listeners are astonished. Here is one of their own, the son of a local carpenter, making such an extraordinary statement, and making it with such authority. Quoting a text from the prophet Isaiah, Jesus tells them that the spirit of the Lord is upon him and has anointed him to bring good news to the afflicted.

And what good news it is; far better than the boldest manifesto of even the most ambitious political party. Liberty to captives, sight to the blind, freedom for the oppressed, a year of favour from the Lord. And, unlike political manifestoes, this isn't an empty pledge. This is happening, Jesus tells them, right here right now, even as he speaks.

It's the kind of good news everyone longs to hear and to believe - an end to suffering, to selfishness, and to all that weighs them down, the promise of a new way of living and relating, the assurance of a new kind of world, the world as it should be.

And the amazing thing is that making this good news happen is not impossible at all. Every time we follow the way of Jesus and live his truth, we are making it real. ■

### SAY

"Lord, help me to proclaim the good news to all who need to hear it."

### DO

Make a point of trying to communicate only good news this week.

Try to be grateful for all the good things in your life.

### PRAY

Many people today feel lost, broken, burdened. Remember them in this Mass. Pray for them.

### LEARN

The good news that Jesus announced to the people of Nazareth all those centuries ago he announces to us too.

We are all called to proclaim the good news.

The Christian is one who follows the example of Jesus.



## REFLECT

Once every four years an extraordinary event takes place in Washington DC: the inauguration of the newly elected or re-elected president of the United States. It doesn't have the pageantry of a British royal coronation or of the installation of a pope, but it is a solemn moment. The president swears on a Bible to uphold, protect and defend the constitution of the United States, "so help me God."

The president then delivers an inaugural address – outlining his or her vision for the next four years and for America's future.

Most inaugural addresses have been largely forgotten. Only a few are regarded as great: Lincoln's second, just 700 words long, with its talk of reconciliation after the bitter civil war; Franklin D. Roosevelt's first in 1933, at the height of the great depression, when he assured a forlorn people: "You have nothing to fear but fear itself." John Kennedy's in 1961, when he challenged Americans to

work together to build a better world: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

One address, delivered on a biting cold Washington morning in 1841, was so long that the new president, William H. Harrison, picked up a chill, which led to his death from pneumonia just one month later, making him the first president to die in office.

Today's Gospel includes what you could call Jesus' inaugural address. He has gone to the synagogue in his home town and is invited to do the reading.

But when he stands up, he ignores the reading for the day and chooses instead a section from the prophet Isaiah. It speaks about a mysterious figure who has been empowered by the Spirit to bring Good News to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, new sight to the blind, to set the downtrodden free, and announce a year

of God's favour, when debts would be cancelled and everyone would be given a new start. Many Jews believed this person would be the Messiah. In choosing this reading and this moment, Jesus is announcing that he is that Messiah.

You can imagine how taken aback his listeners must have felt when they heard Jesus speak those words.

Jesus' choice of Isaiah's words is a deliberate call to hope. He is inaugurating a new 'year of favour,' especially for the poor. It is an inclusive, all-embracing, liberating vision.

The good news he announced to his townspeople in Nazareth at the beginning of his public ministry he announces to us today also. God's favour is with us. As his followers, all we need to do is to listen to him, heed his words, and live according to his vision. ■

**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.*

**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 8:2-4a. 5-6. 8-10  
A reading from the book of Nehemiah.

In those days: Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it, all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen,' lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground. Ezra and the Levites read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the meaning, so that the people understood the reading.

And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. Then he said to them, 'Go on your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our LORD. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

Psalm 19(18):8. 9. 10. 15.  
R. John 6:63c

**R: Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.**

1. The law of the LORD is perfect;  
it revives the soul.  
The decrees of the LORD are steadfast;  
they give 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 pure,  
abiding for ever.  
The judgements of the LORD are true;  
they are, 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 rock and my redeemer! **R.**

**SECOND READING** 1 Corinthians 12:12-30

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.  
(For shorter form read between > <)

> Brothers and sisters: Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many.< If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where

would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honourable we bestow the greater honour, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honour to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.

> Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. < And God has appointed in the Church first Apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL** Luke 4:18

**R: Alleluia, alleluia.**

The Lord has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor;  
to proclaim liberty to the captives.

**R: Alleluia.**

**GOSPEL** Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

At that time: Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll, and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

And he rolled up the scroll, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

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

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

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

Or

*I am the light of the world, says the Lord;  
whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life.*

**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... **Amen.**