

Scripture Study

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time—Cycle C



Opening prayer

Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10

(Psalm 19:8-10, 15)

1 Corinthians 12:12-30

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

Overview of the Gospel:

- This Sunday's reading starts at the beginning of Luke's Gospel (Chapter 1) and concludes in Chapter 4, skipping over the Infancy Narratives and Jesus' baptism (which we looked at during Advent) and his temptation in the wilderness (which we will be looking at during Lent).
- Luke emphasizes in the prologue to his Gospel (verses 1-4) the reasons he wrote, and the care with which he compiled the information, and the reliability of his sources.
- After he has preached and performed miracles in other parts of Judea, Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth. No doubt his reputation as a preacher and miracle worker preceded him and his fellow townsfolk were curious to see what sort of things he would say and do.
- Called upon to read the Scripture and make commentary in the local synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus applies the messianic announcement of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-2) to himself. Rather than seeing the miracles they had heard of him performing elsewhere, he announces to them the Kingdom of God. Next week, we will see their surprising reaction to that announcement.

Questions:

- What do you learn from verses 1-4 about Luke? About the reason he wrote his Gospel? About his sources? Who might these sources have been? Why is it important to seek out reliable and authoritative sources for learning our about our Faith?
- Compare verses 14 and 18 with Luke 3:21 and Luke 4:1. What is the common element in each of these verses? What does it tell you about the source of Jesus' power?
- What is significant about the time, the place, and the posture taken by Jesus in this story (verses 16 and 21-22) for his reading from the prophet Isaiah?
- What is Jesus' five-fold mission (verses 18-19)? How did Jesus fulfill it then? How is he fulfilling it now? How do we take part in Jesus' mission (see Second Reading)?
- In the First Reading, what were some of the reactions of the people as they heard the Law read and explained to them? What is our reaction to hearing God's Word proclaimed?
- What expectations stirred in the people as a result of Jesus' claim (verses 21-22)? Based on this reading, what expectations about Jesus fill your heart?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 436, 695, 713-14, 1286, 2443

Closing prayer

Those who are led by the Holy Spirit have true ideas; that is why so many ignorant people are wiser than the learned. The Holy Spirit is light and strength. -St. John Vianney

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!

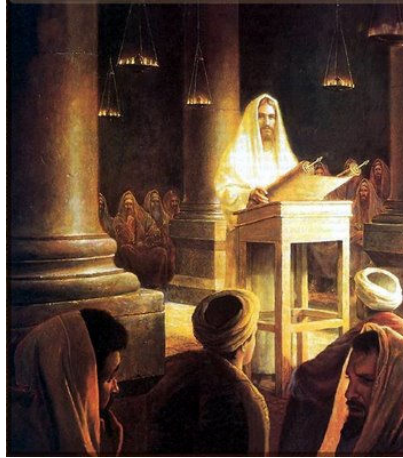
"Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee"

Scripture: *Luke 1:1-4,14-22*

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, 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 know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning 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 he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

Meditation: What would you give to be filled with the knowledge of God's truth and goodness? The four



gospels point us to the very source of truth itself in the person of Jesus Christ. Luke's gospel, especially his introduction, is somewhat unique among the four gospels. Luke speaks in the first-person. He addresses his friend, Theophilus, a name which means "beloved of God". In so many words he says, I am writing to you the most incredible story humankind has known. And this story is utterly believable because it comes from reliable firsthand witnesses who knew Jesus personally, heard his teaching, saw his miracles, and witnessed his death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Father in heaven. The word "gospel" literally means "good news". The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ and the freedom he has won for us through his death and resurrection. The gospel is God's word for us today! It's a living word that has power to change and transform lives, and bring freedom and healing to those who receive it as the word of God. Do you want to be changed and transformed by God's living word? Listen to his Son and receive his word with expectant faith and trust.

Luke tells us that Jesus began his public ministry in his own land of Galilee where he was raised as a child. Jesus' first public words in his hometown synagogue amazed both

his family and townspeople. It was customary for the president of the synagogue to call on different people each week to read from the Hebrew bible and say a few words. Jesus read the text from the prophet Isaiah that explained how the Messiah would come in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring freedom to those oppressed by sin and evil (see Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus commented that he himself would fulfill this prophecy. Only a madman or the Messiah would dare to make such a claim! Jesus not only got their startled attention, he awoke in his people fresh hope that God would indeed fulfill his promises to them. Luke tells us that the people received Jesus' words favorably and wondered what would become of "Joseph's son". In Jesus we see the grace of God in action. His gracious words bring hope, joy, and favor to all who were ready to receive him. Are you hungry for God's word?

Jesus came for our sake and for our salvation. He came to set us free from the worst tyranny possible – slavery to sin and the fear of death, and the eternal destruction of both body and soul. God's power alone can save us from emptiness and poverty of spirit, from confusion and error, and from hopelessness and the fear of annihilation. The gospel of salvation is "good news" for us today. Do you know the joy and freedom of the gospel?

"Lord Jesus, you are the fulfillment of all our hopes and dreams. Through the gift of your Holy Spirit you bring us grace, truth, life, and freedom. Fill me with the joy of the gospel and inflame my heart with burning love for you and zeal for your word."

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