

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

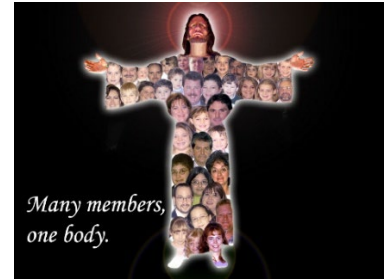
Reading 1: [Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10](#)

Responsorial Psalm: [19:8, 9, 10, 15](#)

Reading II: [1 Corinthians 12:12-30](#)

Gospel: [Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/012322.cfr>



With the third Sunday, the church again turns to Luke for the coming weeks. The chosen passage comes from two different chapters. The first part is Luke's introduction to the Gospel and how he gathered information. The second part is the beginning of Jesus public ministry, his first preaching.

Luke is not an eyewitness. He is drawing from others the events that took place and wants to assure the reader that these were real events, but Luke is not a historian as in the modern sense of the word. He is conveying the significance of the life and teaching of Jesus. Luke addresses his work to Theophilus which means friend of God. In a sense, it is addressed to each of us.

The selected texts then move to Jesus returning from his baptism by John and time in the desert to his home region of Galilee. In time, he visits his hometown of Nazareth. On the sabbath day, he went to the synagogue and as was the custom, a visitor was asked to read. The passage that is quoted is the combination of two passages from Isaiah from chapters 61 and 58. He announces that he has been anointed and his ministry is to free the oppressed and to announce a year of God's favor.

Anointed One is the English form of Christ (Greek) and Messiah (Hebrew). He is making a strong claim. In being the anointed one his role is not to start a war but to include the marginalized and bring hope to all who are suffering in life. This was to give a new vision to those who were subjugated to the Romans, who lived to get enough for today, and who barely made it through life each day. God had not forgotten them, and God's promises were being fulfilled. This theme of fulfillment will reoccur in later passages from Luke.

Jesus applies the words of Scripture to himself. He gathers a vision for life and ministry from the Word of God. The Scriptures are not merely historical words but a living Word (Heb 4:12 and Phil 2:16). It is valuable to hear the scriptures as addressed to us. They are not some distant conversations but a message to us that needs to be read as a letter from a friend. The scriptures can help us grow in our relationship with God, be a source of coming to know ourselves better, and an inspiration for living a fuller life.

Take time with Sunday Scriptures, the daily readings, or in reading sections of particular books. Some of the Scriptures need some historical context to understand the focus of the message but God can use any of them to wake us up or help a question to develop.

The first reading comes from the Book of Nehemiah. He was the political leader in Jerusalem was the exiles from Babylon returned in the 400s before Christ. He is charged with rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and therefore rebuilding the life of those who had returned. Ezra is the priest who reads and explains the scriptures about how the people were to live. Those gathered were deeply touched by what they heard. The leaders encouraged them to rejoice because they were not free to live in accordance with God's instruction. They heard not only words but God's invitation to live.

Paul instructs the Corinthians in the second reading that all who have come to believe have a role in the Christian community. Whatever that role is, it is an important role just as all part of the human body are need for a person to function. He compares some of the more prominent parts and they are not superior to one another but vital to each other. So, with the Body of Christ, some have more public roles, and some have unseen roles. A catechist has a more public role, but it is not more important than someone who sits with a sick person and reads to her or him. Those who have leadership in liturgical service have an important role to play but being a good parent is as important. Each person has a role to play in fulfilling the mission of the Christian community. If one skips the responsibility, the community will be a little less.

The divisions within the Body of Christ, the various denominations, diminish the witness and power of the Gospel in society. The church is in the middle of the week of prayer for Christian Unity. It is time to reflect on how we have contributed to the divisions in Christianity, of how we may have been judgmental toward another church or presented ourselves as better than another group. Each Christian shares in the same Spirit of God and holds part of God's truth. Christians can learn from one another and help each other grow in being good disciples.

Reflection Questions:

Where do you see a need for a year of favor from God? How can you make this happen?

When has a scriptural text touched you in a significant way? What was that text?

What role do you have in the Body of Christ? What would happen if you ignored your responsibilities?

What can you do to promote greater unity and understanding between Christians?

Themes

Word of God

Listening to and Praying with the Scriptures

Being an active part of the Body of Christ

Christian Unity

Prayer Suggestions:

For greater openness to God's Word: that we may allow God's Word to enter our deepest selves, enlighten the darkness of our hearts, and free us to live as daughters and sons of God

For openness to the Holy Spirit: that we may nurture and develop the gifts that the Spirit has given us and use them to build up the Body of Christ and in service of others

For healing within churches: that God will free us from rivalries and past wounds so that we can work together in serving Christ who brought forgiveness to all

