

During this unprecedented time in our world's history, we offer you the following material for your praying and reflecting on God's Word.

Introduction - January 23, 2022

Today's Gospel reading combines two separate passages taken from the Gospel of Luke. First we hear the opening verses where Luke establishes the purpose of his Gospel. In this passage, we learn that Luke may have written to a specific person, Theophilus; but the word Theophilus may also be a general reference, functioning as the phrase "Dear Reader" might in contemporary writing. In Greek, the word Theophilus translates as "lover of God." In the second part, we hear that Jesus is in his hometown of Nazareth, attending the synagogue on the Sabbath, which is said to be his custom. In this account, we find another important clue that Jesus lived as a faithful, observant Jew. As Jesus stands in the synagogue, he reads from the scroll handed to him; it contains the words of the prophet Isaiah. At this early moment in his ministry, Jesus announces his mission in continuity with Israel's prophetic tradition. This reading from Isaiah defines Jesus' ministry. Jesus' ministry will include bringing glad tidings to the poor, liberty to captives, healing to the sick, freedom to the oppressed, and proclaiming a year acceptable to the Lord.

The "year acceptable to the Lord" is a reference to the Jewish tradition of Sabbath years and jubilee. The Sabbath year was observed every seventh year. It was a year of rest when land was left fallow and food stores were to be shared equally with all. A year of Jubilee was celebrated every fiftieth year, the conclusion of seven cycles of Sabbath years. It was a year of renewal in which debts were forgiven and slaves were freed.

This tradition of Jubilee is the framework for God's promise of salvation. And yet in Jesus, something new begins. Jesus not only announces God's salvation, he brings this salvation about in his person. The Kingdom of God is now at hand. It is made present in Jesus, in his life, death, and Resurrection. Jesus will send the Holy Spirit so that the Kingdom of God can be fulfilled.

Lectio Divina with the Sunday Gospel

Lectio Divina means 'divine reading'. It is a way to pray using the holy scriptures in a step-by-step process. Gather the entire family around and make the sign of the Cross. Light a candle.

Leader: "Holy Spirit, you inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write what you wanted us to know for the sake of our salvation. Inspire us now to hear those words not only with our ears, but our hearts, so that we might know your saving Word for us today."

- Have one person **read** the scripture slowly, out loud and have a few moments of silence afterwards. (It may be helpful for everyone to have a copy of the reading).
- **Read** the scripture again out loud and choose a single word or short phrase that touches, speaks or surprises you. Share with everyone.
- **Read** the scripture out loud one more time and discuss what is happening directly in the text.
- **Meditate** on what God is doing now in our lives through this text.
- **Respond** to what God is doing through prayer.
- **Contemplate** on what God is asking of me through this text and how to use these words as a gift for others through my actions.
- After a period of silence, end with the Sign of the Cross.

(see over)

The Holy Gospel for January 23, 2022

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country.

He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom.

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 bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

(see over)

Family Activities

- ❖ Gather up current newspapers and magazines or watch a local newscast in its entirety as a family. We hear stories every day of people in need in our community, country and around the world. Reflect on what were some areas of need that you came across? In this Gospel, we hear of Jesus' mission (which is our mission too) that he would work to show forth the Kingdom of God. What can you do to bring forth the Kingdom of God as it relates to the needs around you?
- ❖ The Word of God (Old and New Testament) are God's revelation to the people whom God has chosen to reveal the Truth. They all point to the Word of God, Incarnate who is Jesus. What he has come to proclaim is the Good News that God desires us to be one with Jesus, in proclaiming GOD's glory. Have each member of the family choose a favourite passage or story from the bible. Reflect on what God is trying to say to you in these words? What is your response to these particular words of God?
- ❖ Jesus does something difficult in today's Gospel. He goes back to his hometown, Nazareth, to teach in the synagogue there. He quickly finds out that it's not easy to go back home, where everyone knows you as a "normal" person, and present yourself as the Son of God, healer, and saviour. Jesus was rejected. Jesus was rejected, people didn't understand what he was trying to do. Even when Jesus gave them the information they needed, they couldn't wrap their minds around it. Their existing ideas of the world wouldn't let their minds accept what Jesus was saying about God and the world. Reflect on how you see the world today. How do these ideas help or hinder your understanding of who Jesus is and what he did?

Prayer:

**Give us grace, O Lord,
to answer readily the call of our Saviour Jesus Christ
and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation,
that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvellous works;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen**