

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 30, 2022

This Sunday, we read from the Gospel of Luke, continuing immediately from last week's Gospel. We learn that the people of Nazareth are impressed by Jesus' words, and yet they seem surprised. They still think of Jesus as merely Joseph's son. They do not expect such words from someone they believe that they know. They are proud of their home-town boy who has made something of himself. They hope that he will do the miracles and wonders in their town as he has been doing in Capernaum and other areas in Galilee. This Gospel is about who Jesus really is and who people believe him to be. It is the words that follow his reading from the prophet Isaiah that seem to offend them. Jesus challenges and provokes the people of Nazareth by referring to examples in which Israel rejected the prophets. He also challenges them to respond to his message, the message of a prophet, in a way that is different from their ancestors. This call for a new response leads to his rejection. Just as the people at Nazareth did not welcome the Good News that Jesus announced, so too many among the people of Israel will not accept the preaching of the gospel. After Jesus' words of challenge, Luke reports that there was a movement to kill Jesus by throwing him over a cliff. Jesus walks away from the crowd that intended to kill him; it is not yet his time. The animosity of the people of Nazareth prefigures and prepares the reader of Luke's Gospel for the cross. Luke wants all to understand that it is through his death on the cross and resurrection that Jesus offers God's salvation to all.

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 30, 2022

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit,
came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.
He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom,
and read from the Prophet Isaiah.

The eyes of all 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?”
Jesus said to them,
“Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb,
‘Doctor, cure yourself!’
And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown
the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’”

And he said, “Truly I tell you,
no Prophet is accepted in his hometown.
But the truth is,
there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah,
when the heaven was shut up three years and six months,
and there was a severe famine over all the land;
yet Elijah was sent to none of them
except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon.
There were also many lepers in Israel
in the time of the Prophet Elisha,
and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”

When they heard this,
all in the synagogue were filled with rage.
They got up, drove Jesus out of the town,
and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built,
so that they might hurl him off the cliff.
But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

The Gospel of the Lord.

(see over)

Family Activities

- ❖ Reflect on some rules that are hard to follow. These can be rules at home, school, work etc. Now reflect on why we have each of these rules. Rules are usually set for the well-being of the people. They are set by parents, teachers, other adults, bosses, leaders etc. Jesus taught us a special set of rules. These rules help us to live holy lives. But as the Gospel reading explains, not all the people followed Jesus' rules. Even the chosen people of Israel, at times refused to follow Jesus' way. Reflect on the ways Jesus calls us to live. Which of these are easier to follow and which are more challenging? Reflect on why some are easier and some are more difficult to follow? How can we respond differently to the call of Jesus?
- ❖ Has anyone resisted, ridiculed, criticized or rejected you because of your belief in Jesus? How did that make you feel? When Jesus was rejected by his own townspeople, he probably felt the same way you did. Remember that Jesus was fully human and had human emotions. When we do the work of Jesus, we will come across difficulties and even outright rejection. No matter what your status, race, gender, age, ethnicity, etc is, we are all called to be prophets. To be a prophet is to bring Jesus' message to others. How can we take Jesus' words and actions to give us the strength we need to become prophets here and now? What message do you want to proclaim to those around you?

Prayer:

***Blessed are you, Lord God,
giver of all gifts and caller of all people to be your spokespersons to others.
Through your goodness, you invite us to speak your truth in love.***

***Often we have made excuses on why we should not have to answer your call.
We feel unqualified or scared.***

***We sometimes want to do our own thing and follow our own paths
rather than do what is for the good of others.***

***Yet, you continue to remind us that you have chosen us from before our birth
to be your prophets who speak your Truth.***

***We pray that you will continue to gift us with your Holy Spirit and the
discernment necessary so that we can use the gifts you give us to speak your Truth
and to do it in a loving, caring manner, so that others will respond and grow
into the fulness of the union with Jesus the Christ, Your Son.***

***We lift this prayer of praise and thanks to You, in Jesus' name, for He is one with You
and the Holy Spirit, our one and only God, forever and ever.***

Amen