



**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

***The Third Sunday of Epiphany***

**Gospel Reading**

**Luke 4.14-21**

**The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry**

14 Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. 15 He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

**The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth**

16 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, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 ‘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,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

20 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. 21 Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

**Other Readings: Nehemiah 8.1-3,5-6,8-10    Psalm 19    1 Corinthians 12.12-31a**

**Homily**

The Church names this season “Epiphany” - meaning revelation of the Divine. At Jesus’ baptism, he was affirmed by the Father and the Holy Spirit came upon him; then, having won the battles of temptation in the wilderness, he returns to Galilee, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

In today's passage, Luke records Jesus declaring his mission at his home Synagogue, knowing that he would be rejected by them. This was a community who knew him, and his family well. They had watched him grow up. Now, they had heard about the amazing things he did in Jerusalem and in the local towns.

Jesus deliberately selected and read a messianic text from Isaiah 61 and then identified himself with it declaring, "Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." He is stating the purpose of the Kingdom of Heaven, his God-given mission, the Good News of the Kingdom of God. It was a lot for them to take in! It is a lot for us to take in. Jesus' mission was broader, more profound and comprehensive, than that of any local Rabbi; it was, and is, for all humanity.

What is the substance of Jesus' mission? To bring Good News to the poor (spiritually and materially as his disciples through the ages seek for a fair sharing of the earth's resources); to release captives (from injustice and bondage); recovery of sight (through healing and revelation); to set the oppressed free (from physical and mental oppression); to proclaim the year of Jubilee - a time of celebration, when debts were cancelled and bondservants released. This is the work of the Kingdom of God – The Good News and the hope that the world desperately needs to receive. But how? This work requires an army of faithful people to model, share and teach the way; to spread vision and a hope for better things.

Jesus preached; "The time has come, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, repent and believe the Good News." Repentance and faith require a change of heart. God's kingdom, his blessings and power, are available to all who will change their ways and trust him. This is the heart of Jesus' message to the world; from his personal ministry, shared with the twelve, then to the 72, and on to the church - his body scattered across the earth. So, he taught us to pray; "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth." When we pray this prayer, we identify ourselves with God's mission to redeem humanity. This is the Gospel of God.

Luke tells us that Jesus was "filled with the power of the Spirit" to fulfil his ministry, and, just before his Ascension, he promised the Spirit's power to the church, seen at Pentecost, when the Church was born. We need the Spirit's power and direction to enable us to "Make disciples of all nations". Jesus promises that same power to equip us to demonstrate his Good News to those around us. Our best ideas and efforts will fail without his inspiration, direction and power with us.

### **Conversation Questions**

1. How do we understand the mission of Jesus and the Church in modelling and sharing the Kingdom of Heaven in our families, acquaintances, communities and workplaces?
2. How should we respond when the seeds we sow seem not to bear fruit? Should we be surprised?

3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you?  
What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

### **Prayer**

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

### **Collect of the day**

*O God,  
who by the leading of a star  
manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth:  
mercifully grant that we,  
who know you now by faith,  
may at last behold your glory face to face;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.*

*(or)*

*Creator of the heavens,  
who led the Magi by a star  
to worship the Christ-child:  
guide and sustain us,  
that we may find our journey's end  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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