

Read



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

Psalms 19:8, 9, 10, 15

1 Corinthians 12:12-30 or 12:12-14, 27

Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21



REFLECTION

This Sunday's Gospel reading reveals Jesus' mission of hope and healing to all people, especially those who were marginalized and oppressed. The verses from Isaiah that Jesus read in the synagogue were the words the prophet proclaimed to a people who needed to be set free from physical, emotional, and spiritual bondage.

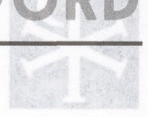
By applying the passage to himself, Jesus also made it clear that he came to fulfill, in a new way, the promises God made to his people through the prophets. He is the ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Christ's ministry is the fulfillment of God's plan to bring salvation to the world. This means that Jesus' mission is part of God's great plan for humanity.

At the crux of God's plan and Christ's mission is the promise of restoration and healing for a broken world. Christ's ministry was not about gaining power or prestige, but about selfless service to others.

May we be inspired by Christ's example to grow in love and compassion and to work for a more just world. Most of all, let us ask Jesus to reveal our chains to us and free us from the bondage of selfishness, anger, prejudice, and everything that keeps us from true freedom in him.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How does today's reading summarize Christ's ministry? Can you think of some scriptural examples of Jesus fulfilling the promises from today's reading?
- ❖ What are some concrete ways Christians can participate in Christ's mission of healing and redemption in our families? Our communities? The nation?



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 26, 2025



ACTION

This week, look for ways to participate in Christ's ministry to the oppressed in your community. Consider volunteering for or donating to a local charity that supports refugees, prisoners, addicts, survivors of human trafficking, people experiencing homelessness, or other marginalized groups.



Amazing Grace (2006)



January 26, 2025

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #69C

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

Psalms 19:8, 9, 10, 15

1 Corinthians 12:12-30 or 12:12-14, 27

Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

St. Luke, the Gospel writer, was a beloved physician and, traditionally, a traveling companion of St. Paul (Colossians 4:14). He most likely wrote his Gospel about fifty years after the death of Jesus. In his prologue, he tells us that he is writing to Theophilus ("friend of God") to provide an orderly, authentic account about Jesus, taken from the eyewitness accounts and oral history that had been passed to him, so that all friends of God would have the truth of Jesus and his teachings. The second half of the Gospel reading details how Jesus proclaimed his identity as the one who fulfills the words of the prophets. The teens are encouraged in their own attempts to share the Good News of Jesus with others.

FOCUS: Jesus' mission is our mission: to help those in need and share the truth of God's love.

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On January 28, we celebrate the life of St. Thomas Aquinas. Thomas came from a wealthy family in Italy. After he went to the university in Naples, he decided to join the Dominicans. His family did not want him to be a poor friar, so they held him captive in a family castle for one year. Though his family attempted many times to change his mind, they eventually gave up, and he dedicated himself to

becoming a Dominican. He also became a brilliant philosopher and theologian and authored many books, including his most famous work *Summa Theologiae*. Because of his significant contributions to the knowledge and faith of the Church, Thomas is considered a Doctor of the Church and is the patron saint of students, universities, and scholars.

Church Teaching Connection

"But evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social. This is why evangelization involves an explicit message, adapted to the different situations constantly being realized, about the rights and duties of every human being, about family life without which personal growth and development is hardly possible, about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development" (Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 29).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning

and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all.

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, / because he has anointed me / to bring glad tidings to the poor. / He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives / and recovery of sight to the blind, / to let the oppressed go free, / and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”* Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

The good news of Jesus was passed on in oral tradition from Jesus' disciples, followers, and eyewitnesses to the following generation. It is likely that many of Jesus' followers were illiterate and had no need for a written record. As time went on, the early Church grew and spread out and there was a need for people to compile and edit the stories of Jesus so that they could be maintained, passed along, and retain the core truths of the message and life of Jesus. The Gospel writers, or evangelists, wrote

down the story of Jesus. Each wrote from his own experience and to his own community, focusing on particular aspects of Jesus' life to explain who he was and how he came to save the people. Over time, the four Gospels we have today were accepted by the Church to be authentic witnesses of the faith. They are not meant to be historical fact in the way that a history textbook might be. Instead, they are meant to communicate the reality and ultimate truth of who Jesus was and his purpose in life. In the first part of today's Gospel reading, we are given Luke's reason for writing, so that there would be an orderly account of Jesus' life and teachings so others might be assured of the authenticity of them.

► **What are some reasons why you would share the Gospel with others today? How would you go about doing this? What stories of Jesus would you tell? How would your audience affect what you said and how you said it?**

In the second half of today's reading, we skip ahead to chapter 4 of Luke, to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. After his baptism by John and his temptation in the desert, Jesus returns to Nazareth, where he was raised. In the synagogue, Jesus stood up and read from the prophet Isaiah. While this would not have been unusual, his words that followed it were, as he told the people that he was the fulfillment of what God spoke through the prophets. It is a proclamation of sorts to begin his public ministry, akin to an inaugural address of a public leader. His address affirms his mission that he has come to bring good news to the poor, free the oppressed, release the captives, and heal the sick. Jesus came to fulfill the Scriptures and his mission would be one of service to others.

► **Imagine that you are sitting in the synagogue, and a man that you watched grow up in your community tells you that he came to fulfill the words of a great prophet of your faith. How would you react?**

From the verses that follow today's reading, we know that the congregation was initially amazed and spoke highly of Jesus following his pronouncement. But then their wonder turns to doubt and anger. They knew him; how could he make these kinds of claims? They ended up driving him out of town.

Jesus had to have known that boldly declaring himself to be the fulfilment of the prophet's words would lead to anger for those who were not willing to accept him, yet he still stood before them. Jesus still wanted them to hear the truth from him. He gave them a chance to join him, to open their hearts to him, and to radically change their lives in the service of others. Jesus wanted them—and us—to hear his words, believe, and respond with faith. When we share the Gospel with others, we should pray to have the same patience, perseverance, and wisdom of Jesus.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 128.

Jesus reveals himself to be the fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Jesus' ministry is in service of others.

We are called to respond to Jesus, follow him, and share his message with others.

Act on the Word

Fulfilling Scripture Today

For this activity, you will need Bibles, a whiteboard, paper, and pens.

As a large group, read the prophecy of Isaiah in Luke 4:18–19 again. Jesus tells us that he is the one that will bring "glad tidings to the poor," "proclaim liberty to captives," "recovery of sight to the blind," "let the oppressed go free," and "proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."

Divide the teens into small groups. Give them Bibles, paper, and pens. Give each group one line from Isaiah's prophecy. Ask them to use their Bibles to search through the Gospels and note the ways in which Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. Once they are done, gather again as a large group and have each group present their findings, writing them on the whiteboard so that everyone can see.

As a large group, discuss the ways in which the young people, as Jesus' disciples, can use these prophecies as directives to shape their own actions. How can they incorporate these missions of Jesus in their daily lives? In what ways can they serve others as Jesus wishes them to? Discuss which of the directives are most difficult to enact and why. How can they, as a community, work together to serve others in the coming weeks and months?

Closing Prayer

O God,
your encouragement and strength
guide us in our life of discipleship.
May your Spirit always guide
our actions and words
so that we may raise others up
to know the fullness of your kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.