



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 24th, 2016

Introduction to the Word:

We are in the third week of our message series – “Your Move”. God’s will is our happiness and fulfillment. His grace seek to transform us into His image so that we can truly be His beloved child, but at the end of the day - it’s your move!



Warm-Up:

Today’s gospel recounts a change in a person and a challenge to the neighbours. A native son had just returned home to His village after an absence of two years. The way the story has been told: this young Jew had won quite a reputation for Himself while journeying around the region of Galilee preaching the Torah (the Hebrew Testament), healing the infirm, and working other wondrous miracles. On this particular Sabbath, turning to the familiar scroll as he had often done in the past, Jesus selected a passage from Isaiah, chapter 61. As He read slowly and deliberately, it was clear to those in attendance that something had changed. This ‘simple’ carpenter did not read like the young man they remembered. He appeared more self-possessed, confident and mature.

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.”

But then the startling concluding words from the proclaimer: **“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”**

With this attention-grabber as an introduction, Luke, our featured evangelist for this liturgical year, introduces us to the thirty-year-old apprentice-carpenter, who was known to His contemporaries as the son of Mary and Joseph of Nazareth. Then in the First Reading, Ezra reads the words of the Law to the exiled Jews who were so anxious to return to their homeland after



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many years in exile. Ezra uses words that were meant to become strength for their lives and forge a bond that would unite them with their God. Paul, in the Second Reading, in writing to his young and eager community in Corinth, uses graphic words to drive home the importance of mutual respect for their differing gifts, a respect that will emphasize the critical importance of “community” as key to the faith-building process. Paul insists that it is in *community* that they can best be a true reflection of the God in whose image each of us is made.

As Saint Paul has taught us, we together are the body of Christ and individually members of it. As we exercise our roles, responsibilities and charisms – apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, healers, helpers, administrators, speakers – let us in love strive to excel in building up the Church (1 Corinthians, 12.27-28, 14.12).

Reflect and share on the following questions:

- In your mind’s eye, go back in time to your own hometown. Recall, for a few moments, some of your lasting memories: Where were your favourite haunts? Who did you hang out with? Where are those friends now? What changes are most notable? How have you changed?
- If those young friends could see you now, would they be pleasantly surprised, or maybe a little disappointed? Share these thoughts and experiences with your small group members.

CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Leader: The Word of God is fulfilled today in our hearing.

Lord Jesus, Good News for the poor,
Christ Jesus, Liberator of the oppressed,
Lord Jesus, New sight to those in darkness,

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)

FIRST READING (Nehemiah 8:2–4a, 5–6, 8–10)



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The priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the Law. The scribe Ezra stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the purpose. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

So the Levites read from the book, from the Law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law. Then Ezra said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (1 Corinthians 12:12–30)

Brothers and Sisters: Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this.

But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the Church first Apostles, second Prophets, third Teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all Apostles? Are



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all Prophets? Are all Teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (Luke 1:1–4, 4:14–21)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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, Jesus 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 Jesus 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 Jesus began to say to them,
“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)

COMMENTARY:

[Your group may wish to listen again to the Audio of the Lord’s Day Message](#)

[At this point please use the video Message for this series – Week #3](#)

We are in the first month of this new year so much can, and probably will, happen to us in 2016. Our lives will be impacted by a new job or a loss of a job. Our lives will be effected by finishing school, a new school, an empty nest. Our lives may have been impacted by a death or will be during 2016. There will be good and bad news in 2016. So how do we stay spiritually healthy - well it’s Your Move that determines that. It is already God’s will that we be healthy spiritually - but our move decides if we will

Over the past two weeks we have been reflecting on our relationship with God - our Good Good Father - one whom we can Cast our Cares. He calls us - He knocks on the door of our heart - and it’s your move - if you respond.



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During Week #1, we looked at the need to trust His voice. God's voice is for Good, and when we do, we take the first step - Listen and Look. Listen to message of gracious goodness that God offers and we Look at the area of our life that God is calling us to open or close - so His grace may grow within

During Week #2, we accepted that our failures need not be final or fatal but that we take our mistakes in life and turn them into stepping stones for superior success if we simply follow the example and advice of the Perfect Disciple – Mary – and in reference to Jesus : “ **do what ever He tells you.**”

This advice helps us to discern and look for the signs of the Lord and ask ourselves “what is gripping you, and is it from the Lord?” It helps us to search in prayer and find what His Word says and then to seek His peace! Even with this peace we may feel there are moments of not enough - time, resources, abilities, courage - all these grip us, but our God can transform...in fact He wants to.... but first we must make Him our reference point and desire a happy soul with our Reference Point - Jesus Christ as the one on whom we cast our cares.

[Pause here and listen to this song, it is our theme for this series](#)

In the Gospel today - Jesus arrives at the temple in Nazareth and makes something clear – His life was not His own – His move would be for the Father! The community was amazed and what they had been hearing about “the carpenter’s son.” The word of all Jesus was doing had arrived and they thought to themselves - this Jesus fellow is pretty powerful prophet. Then Jesus got up and read the scripture from Isaiah and shocked them not only with the “authority” with which He read it, but also that He said He was fulfilling it. In other words He was saying all I am doing is not in my name, but I am fulfilling the fact that I am a beloved child of God - I am fulfilling God’s plan! Jesus knew His life was not His own. Jesus was living for the Father. Jesus was dedicated to the Father’s will. Are you in your life living for the Father and dedicated to the Father’s will ? Is your move about the Father? Here are two ways to know:

Do you possess **Disposition**? Christ presented Himself in the temple. He was where the Lord was. This is important to be in His presence. His spirit may be around us in nature or in “chair time” but His true presence - real and true - is found when we are before Him in the Eucharist. Nothing replaces being before Him in the Eucharist.

Secondly, do you have the trait of **Docility**? Before going to Nazareth - Jesus was busy but He took time to listen, to look, to do what the Father needed of Him. He strove to live out what it meant to be the “Beloved Son of God.” In seeking faithfulness to that alone He was able to be docile to what God wanted of Him – to be the hands, heart and head of the Father’s mercy. He knew the Lord’s will and so He made His move!



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Christ lived with the full knowledge that His life was not His own - God the Father chose Him at Baptism (my beloved) but it was His move to allow it to be fulfilled. Do we acknowledge that we have been chosen with our gifts and talents as they are (each different as our 2nd Readings reminded us) and allow the Father's will to be fulfilled in our hearing? Do we answer the knocks - encountering, engaging and expressing - the Father's will in our lives? Do we embrace the moments to listen so that in our life -Head, Heart and Hands - are for His glory? Are you living for Him and making Your Move not as if your life is your own, but as if your life is His – because it is!

Message this week – Jesus sends the message His life was not His own. He was not just the carpenter's son – He was the Son of God – beloved and chosen. His move would be for the Father! Are we living like our life as if it belongs to us, or are we living our life for God? It's your move

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion: (15-20 minutes)

Don't forget the three questions on our Video

(Luke) *“Today this Scripture passage has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

St Theresa said, “Christ has no body now but yours.” What evidence is there in your life that you are the hands and feet of Christ?

The British author G.K. Chesterton once wrote that “Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.”

- Would you be inclined to agree or disagree with this statement? Identify as best you can your reasons.
- Reflecting on your personal experience of our parish community, name a few ways that in this Year of Mercy as a small group we could grow in our parish values of *Eucharistic Spirituality, Hospitality and Welcome, Evangelization, Faithfulness to Who God Made Us to Be*

Intercessions:

Leader: Baptized in the one Spirit into the one body, we pray for those who, with us, are members of Christ and for all the human family.

For the Church, may all members live out their individual vocation in service to others and in union with our Holy Father, our Bishop and our Pastor, we pray...



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For nations grieved by conflict and peoples oppressed by war, remembering our parish missions in Haiti, Kenya and Bethlehem: May a serious commitment to the work of justice pervade all hearts, we pray...

For those whom society dismisses as weak or inferior: May they receive from believers the respect due them as children of God, and may the Lord protect the members of our parish who on February 7th will be travelling to Toronto to help feed the homeless, we pray...

For the suffering members of the community: May the Lord's healing power come to them through our caring presence, we pray...

For all of us gathered in small groups at our parish: may hearing the Word of God help bring us together as a parish family working for the common good of our Family of Faith, we pray...

Leader: Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray: [Hail Mary](#)

Closing Activity and Prayer (15-20 minutes)

(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. This time also intent to provide moments to connect and "outreach" to the larger community.)

GROUP PRAYER/ ACTION:

- ✓ Speak together about the Year of Mercy and the upcoming Season of Lent. Begin to discuss how you may wish to make these special times for your group – how will you and your small group connect with the parish activities for the Year of Mercy (First Fridays of Mercy) and the Lenten Mission (March 5-10, 2016)?
- ✓ What are ways which as a group you can support each other as you seek more and more in your life to cast your cares on Him and do whatever He tells you?
- ✓ The Gospel spoke of "the year of the Lord's favour." What are some ways as a group you can make 2016 truly a year of God's favour for our parish family and/or one another? (Suggestion – would you be willing to dedicate an hour before the Blessed Sacrament in our chapel for a person in our parish, for our parish needs, for a person in your small group?)

Let us pray (together)

O God, you have sent Jesus among us as prophet of your covenant and king of your anointing, the Messiah who proclaims to the poor the Good News of your Kingdom. Build us up into one body and make us your instruments of liberation and salvation for all.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever Amen.