

Third Sunday Ordinary Time Year A 2019

27 Readings: no. 69, p. 657; BG, p. 372 1st Reading: Nehemiah 8.2-4a, 5-6, 8-10++ 2nd Reading (longer): 1 Cor. 12.12-30 or 2nd Reading (shorter): 1 Cor. 12.12-14, 27 Gospel: Luke 1.1-4; 4.14-21 **3rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

World Day of Migrants and Refugees ~ ~ Prayer for Christian Unity ~

Does anything gather children more readily than, “Your father wants to speak to you?” It’s pointless to try and hide when Mom and Dad are calling. My father would always find me and sometimes say, son, “if ever you’re called upon to speak to others, remember these three things, He said, “stand-up, to be recognized, speak-up, to be understood, and sit back down quickly to be appreciated.” Insights, I think, he may have garnered from our selected readings today!

In the public square, Ezra, the priest collects the Nation around the Father’s Word and speaks to all who can hear and understand. But a difficulty people occasionally share with me is the sense, they are unable to feel God’s presence. When I suggest they pray, their reply is often, God just doesn’t talk to me. I suggest to them, have you tired **listening** to the pages of scripture?

While, it is so, humankind cannot comprehend the mystery of God, we can and certainly do experience God.

A child in their mother's womb doesn't need to understand. Deep faith is the only experience needed of the child to assure them of their very being. It is not because the mother lacks presence, but rather, because the mother is all-encompassing, understanding seems to be implied. Understanding and faith, we could say, are the devoted companions of each other. And what humankind really wants to understand is something of our place and belonging, in and about, the Community of God.

Ezra dismisses people on this holy day to “go their way, eat of God's abundance, and drink the sweetness that pours forth from the chalice. **And**, don't forget to bring something, to those, for whom nothing is prepared. I imagine shortly, some of you will bring bread, wine and charity to these tables of Word and Sacrificial Feast. We will, after consecration and praying, our common prayer, leave our pews, and come as one Eucharistic People of God to receive Jesus and acclaim Amen. That Oneness, brothers and sisters never ceases to attract, collect and elevate all humanity into Heaven's tenderness and joy!

Breaches of our Oneness only fosters misunderstandings that inevitably, generate strife, division, and marginalization, where on-the-other hand, understanding, collects, unites, and welcomes.

The Christian movement, sisters and brothers, doesn't need any more misunderstanding, divisiveness, or sorters. It needs more listeners, peacemakers, and lovers. St Paul tells us so clearly that it is, in "One Spirit we were all baptized into the one body. And today we pray for those displaced from their sense of home and belonging.

Understanding is the first step on any path to inclusion and fullness, because it extends and expands the willing participant's mind and heart. Understanding, is a primer that makes possible the flow of God's mercy. It won't be political, judicial or theological debate that unites our movement. Instead, it will be Jesus the prime sacrament of God around which, Christians must unite.

When we scan Christian history, it leaves me puzzled in how we could ever have been so divided when collectively we share one faith and one baptism. We have so much in common, and even more today, in the way popular culture targets all Christian traditions. I follow-up wondering if attempts to scrub or overwrite the Gospel message would crumble, if ever exposed to our collective power of reason and experience?

In Nazareth, Jesus, not unlike Ezra, has a message for his hometown crowd. In the synagogue, he is asked to serve as lector. The attendant brings the book of Isaiah, but the town's native son, will select the reading.

The passage chosen is from Isaiah, Chapter 61, also known as, The Mission to the Afflicted discourse! Our Lord's is well prepared to proclaim this lesson, as are, all good and effective lectors! His homily interestingly enough is but nine words long. "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing". First, I challenge you to find a preacher able to similarly keep their homilies to under nine words.

But more, I wonder, could we replace the pronoun Jesus uses in these verses with own name? Let's try under our breath! The spirit of the lord is upon _____, because he has anointed _____ to bring good news to the poor. He has sent _____ to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year 2019, one knowing the Lord's favour.

Friends return to the scriptures often and to this pledge, allowing its words to deeply fashion us. Bring the Gospel into your heart and allow it to reenergize our baptismal vows and draw us ever closer to The Father in Holy Eucharistic joy.

Amen: