

JANUARY 7, 2021  
Memorial of St. Andre Bessette, Religious  
Luke 4: 14-22a

“DON'T MIND STARTING SMALL”

During inauguration of leaders, either presidents, prime ministers, managers, bosses, or the like, their first speech, what we called inaugural speech, are about their plans, dreams, or policies. That is their defining moment as a leader. You will assess already what kind of leader he/she will be. We can see the glimpse who Jesus is in our today's gospel. “The passage is from the prophet Isaiah. It is a messianic prophecy which he applies to himself: ‘This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.’ And what does it say? ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me.’ That is, the Lord has made him King and Lord. He has been made Messiah, which in Hebrew means ‘the Anointed One.’ It is a formal announcement of his identity. And what is the mission of Jesus as Messiah? ‘To bring good news of liberation to the poor. Freedom to those in captivity. Sight to those who are blind. Liberation for the oppressed... These words of Jesus can be seen as his ‘mission statement’. It is what his whole life will be based on. It is not primarily a religious manifesto. It is a manifesto for the kind of life that every human being is called to follow.”<sup>1</sup>

This is the work of the Messiah, the work of Jesus. Even at His birth, He already showed us, who He is: humble, simple, the Light, guide and all people will bow down to Him. If that is the Messiah that we believed in, we, therefore, need to follow Him in such manner throughout our lives.

Let us look on our saint for today. “When Alfred Bessette came to the Holy Cross Brothers in 1870, he carried with him a note from his pastor saying, “I am sending you a saint.” The Brothers found that difficult to believe. Chronic stomach pains had made it impossible for Alfred to hold a job very long and since he was a boy, he had wandered

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<sup>1</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)

from shop to shop, farm to farm, in his native Canada and in the United States, staying only until his employers found out how little work he could do. The Holy Cross Brothers were teachers and, at 25, Alfred still did not know how to read and write. After his vows, Brother Andre was sent to Notre Dame College in Montreal (a school for boys age seven to twelve) as a porter. There his responsibilities were to answer the door, to welcome guests, find the people they were visiting, wake up those in the school, and deliver mail. In 1904, he surprised the Archbishop of Montreal if he could, by requesting permission to, build a chapel to Saint Joseph on the mountain near the college. The wary Archbishop asked him, "Are you having visions of Saint Joseph telling you to build a church for him?" Brother Andre reassured him. "I have only my great devotion to St. Joseph to guide me." The Archbishop granted him permission to keep building as long as he didn't go into debt. Through kindness, caring, and devotion, Brother Andre helped many souls experience healing and renewal on the mountaintop. There were even cases of physical healing. But for everything, Brother Andre thanked St. Joseph. Despite financial troubles, Brother Andre never lost faith or devotion. Brother Andre didn't mind starting small. For him, if you can't afford to give a lot of money to a cause, just give a little. If you can't afford hours a week in volunteering, try an hour a month on a small task. It is amazing how those small steps can lead you up the mountain as they did for Brother Andre."<sup>2</sup>

Let us therefore, ask the intercession of Brother Andre that we may do the work of Jesus, little it may be, for the greater glory of God.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org)