



AMDG
THIRD SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
YEAR C
27TH JANUARY 2019



The Law of the Lord is perfect

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.

As we step further into our New Year, this Sunday's texts provide us with solid teaching to build up ourselves, our communities, our church, and our society in the light of God's word, and in the clear direction of Jesus's mission. And we are urged to do this with joy and conviction.

Ezra the priest, in the *First Reading*, reads to the people from the Book of the Law. They are newly returned from exile to rebuild the city walls and the Temple. Moved to tears, they are told, 'Do not be sad; the joy of the Lord is your stronghold'.

Psalms 118 (119) is a hymn of praise to God's law. His words give spirit and life.

St Paul, in the *Second Reading*, tells us that through baptism, we have all become members of one body, with Christ as our head. We are dependent on each other, sharing our gifts and our sorrows.

The *Gospel* passage begins with St Luke's opening preface, then moves on to show us Jesus, newly returned from the desert after his baptism. In the synagogue, Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah – this is Jesus's own 'mission statement'.

As we ponder the essential place of God's word in our texts, may we also pray for a deeper appreciation and reverence for it.

PSALM 18 (19)

R./ Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.

May the spoken words of my mouth,
the thoughts of my heart,
win favour in your sight, O Lord,
my rescuer, my rock!

I come to pray, conscious that not only am I in God's presence, but that I also meet him in the scripture – his word. I relax under his loving gaze and prepare to listen.

I take up the psalm and read it slowly, lingering over the words.
Some may strike me as cold – 'law', 'rule', 'precepts', 'command', 'decrees' ...?
But this is a psalm of praise for God's law – the law which is his revelation,
his will, his word. And so maybe I can see it as giving life?

It is perfect, holy, right, just, true, to be trusted ...
It revives, gladdens, gives wisdom and light ...

Which are the words that I can respond to?
In what ways do they give new life to my understanding of God's law –
the God who is my rescuer and rock?

I speak to the Lord about this.
Perhaps I can carry into my day the words of the refrain:
'Your words are spirit Lord, and they are life'.

GOSPEL LUKE 1: 1–4; 4:14–21 (part)

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him. He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.'

As I begin my prayer, I try to relax and focus my attention on my regular breath. I may close my eyes or gaze at a candle. Gently I slow down and become aware of being in God's presence.

When I am ready, I read the text carefully a couple of times.

Perhaps I can imagine Jesus in the synagogue setting. The people know him, he comes here every Sabbath. But now he returns, having gained attention elsewhere in Galilee for his teaching and preaching.

As one of the crowd, what am I expecting from this familiar, but now renowned, Jesus?

As I listen to the words of Isaiah spoken in Jesus's own voice, do they strike me anew? Does Jesus read gently or forcefully?

What, in particular, causes me to pause?

This is not an abstract message – what is it saying to *me* today?

How can I live out something of this message as his disciple?

I spend some time pondering this with the Lord and talking to him.

I give thanks for the many ways I see others putting Jesus's words into practice around me.

I end my prayer with '*Glory be to the Father...*'

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not be sad:
the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.

First Reading

May the spoken words of my mouth,
the thoughts of my heart,
win favour in your sight, O Lord.

Psalm

Together you are Christ's body;
but each of you is a different part of it.

Second Reading

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.

Gospel

This week's texts if you want to reflect further

Neh. 8: 2-6, 8-10; Ps. 18 (19); 1 Cor. 12: 12-30; Luke 1: 1-4; 4:14-21



**He has
sent me
to bring
the good news
to the poor**



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT
Ministries



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LDS