

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT

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

FIRST READING Nehemiah 8:2-6,8-10

A reading from the book of Nehemiah.
Ezra the priest brought the Law before the
assembly, consisting of men, women, and
children old enough to understand. This was
the first day of the seventh month. On the
square before the Water Gate, in the presence
of the men and women, and children old
enough to understand, he read from the book
from early morning to noon; all the people
listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden dais
erected for the purpose. In full view of all the
people – since he stood higher than all the
people – Ezra opened the book; and when
he opened it all the people stood up. Then
Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all
the people raised their hands and answered,
“Amen! Amen!”; then they bowed down and,
face to the ground, prostrated themselves
before the Lord. And Ezra read from the Law
of God, translating and giving the sense, so
that the people understood what was read.

Then Nehemiah – His Excellency – and
Ezra, priest and scribe (and the Levites who
were instructing the people) said to all the
people, “This day is sacred to the Lord your
God. Do not be mournful, do not weep.” For
the people were all in tears as they listened to
the words of the Law.

He then said, “Go, eat the fat, drink the
sweet wine, and send a portion to the man
who has nothing prepared ready. For this day
is sacred to our Lord. Do not be sad: the joy
of the Lord is your stronghold.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 18

Response:

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

1. 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. (R.)
2. The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes. (R.)
3. The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.
The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just. (R.)
4. May the spoken words of my mouth,
the thoughts of my heart,
win favour in your sight, O Lord,
my rescuer, my rock! (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 12:12-30

(For shorter form, read between > <)

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

>Just as a human body, though it is made
up of many parts, is a single unit because all
these parts, though many, make one body, so
it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all
baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as
well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to
us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any
of its many parts.< If the foot were to say, “I
am not a hand and so I do not belong to the
body,” would that mean that it stopped being
part of the body? If the ear were to say, “I
am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the
body,” would that mean that it is not a part
of the body? If your whole body was just one
eye, how would you hear anything? If it was
just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate
parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts
were the same, how could it be a body? As
it is, the parts are many but the body is one.
The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not
need you,” nor can the head say to the feet,
“I do not need you.”

What is more, it is precisely the parts of
the body that seem to be the weakest which
are the indispensable ones; and it is the least
honourable parts of the body that we clothe
with the greatest care. So our more improper
parts get decorated in a way that our more
proper parts do not need. God has arranged
the body so that more dignity is given to the
parts which are without it, and so that there
may not be disagreements inside the body,
but that each part may be equally concerned
for all the others. If one part is hurt, all parts
are hurt with it. If one part is given special
honour, all parts enjoy it.

>Now you together are Christ's body; but
each of you is a different part of it.< In the
Church, God has given the first place to
apostles, the second to prophets, the third to
teachers; after them, miracles, and after them
the gift of healing; helpers, good leaders,
those with many languages. Are all of them
apostles, or all of them prophets, or all of
them teachers? Do they all have the gift of
miracles, or all have the gift of healing? Do
all speak strange languages, and all interpret
them?

>The word of the Lord.<

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Lord has sent me

to bring the Good News to the poor,

to proclaim liberty to captives. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 1:1-4;14-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

Seeing that many others have undertaken
to draw up accounts of the events that have
taken place among us, exactly as these were
handed down to us by those who from the
outset were eye witnesses and ministers of
the word, I in my turn, after carefully going
over the whole story from the beginning,
have decided to write an ordered account for
you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may
learn how well founded the teaching is that
you have received.

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.

He then 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the

Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation

he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin

Mary,

and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,

and rose again on the third day

in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory

to judge the living and the dead

and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,

the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son is adored and

glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Look toward the Lord and be radiant;

let your faces not be abashed.



13th century mosaic of Jesus Christ in the Hagia Sophia temple in Istanbul, Turkey

Today we begin our systematic reading of the Gospel according to Luke as part of the Liturgy of the Word.

The evangelist tells his symbolic correspondent about his intention to write a properly-ordered account of the tradition in which Theophilus has been instructed, a tradition which goes back to those who were “eyewitnesses and ministers of the word”, and so whose testimony is reliable.

However, the Gospel narratives are not simply historical accounts as we would regard the notion of history. They are also written from the evangelists’ theological perspective, their understanding of who Jesus is and what he means. One aspect of Luke’s presentation of Jesus is Jesus as the prophet. This is clear from today’s episode in the synagogue at Capernaum. Jesus describes his mission in terms of that of Isaiah. The key to this lies at the centre of the scene in the line, “to the blind new sight”. Throughout the Gospel, Luke will use this image as a way of talking about faith. To see properly is to accept Jesus and his message, and what he is talking about here is giving people recovery of their sight, in other words, something they have lost. He announces “the Lord’s year of favour”, possibly a jubilee year when debts are forgiven and a new start can be made. The passage from Isaiah also mentions poor people; they will be the particular object of Jesus’ care and concern, and the term includes those who find themselves on the margin of social and religious life, just as they figure prominently in the preaching of the prophets.

Luke tells us also that Jesus returns to Galilee “with the power of the Spirit in him”. The Spirit is the driving force within the ministry of Jesus, just as it will be within the spread of the Gospel and the church in Acts. ■

SAY

He sent me to bring good news to the poor.

DO

When you next see a homeless person or a food bank, ask yourself what you could do to bring good news. Then do it.



LEARN

The Spirit in the Bible is a force from God, empowering an individual for their mission.

The name *Theophilus* means ‘Lover of God’.

Theophilus, the addressee, may be Luke’s literary patron or a symbolic title for the reader of the Gospel and Acts.

The Gospel and Acts are two parts of Luke’s literary work.

REFLECT

Jesus is a prophetic Messiah; he applies to himself the text from Second Isaiah, where the prophet describes himself as “anointed” with “the Spirit of the Lord”. Although the biblical prophets’ preaching centres on political and economic issues, Jesus’ actions are more on the personal level. Oppression is understood as the person being bound by forces such as demons, illness and the like, and liberation is the freeing of

the person from these malignant influences. However, Luke’s concern for those who are poor and marginalised, those without a voice, is shown in the Canticle of Mary, the *Magnificat*, which forms part of the narrative of Mary’s visit to Elizabeth. The *Magnificat* is Mary’s response to her cousin’s declaring, “Blessed is she who believed that what the Lord said to her would be fulfilled”. Luke’s Gospel is often quoted by those who write about

issues of injustice in society, along with the teachings of the biblical prophets. In the prophets’ thinking, poverty is an indictment of the society; might the existence of homeless people and food banks caused by economic policies be the modern equivalent of the poverty and vulnerability of the unfortunate individuals of biblical times? ■