

**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,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING**

Neh 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**

Ps 18

Response:

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

**SECOND READING**

1 Cor 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**

Lk 1:1-4. 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 God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

*(all bow during the next two lines)*

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.**

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray,  
and in sanctifying them  
grant that they may profit us for salvation.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**Look toward the Lord and be radiant;  
let your faces not be abashed.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that, receiving the grace  
by which you bring us to new life,  
we may always glory in your gift.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## RECOVER YOUR VISION!

(LUKE 1:1-4; 4:14-21)



We begin today our reading of the Gospel of Luke, our Gospel text for this season of 'Ordinary Time'.

He opens his account with a dedication to his patron, Theophilus, with an explanation of his reasons for embarking on a work which others – in his view, unsatisfactorily – had done before him. He stresses the research he had done on the sources from “eyewitnesses and ministers of the word”, thus assuring his readers that the material he is presenting is reliable, but better-ordered than those others currently available at his time of writing.

Our extract then passes to the outset of Jesus ministry, carried out in “the power of the Spirit”, a recurrent theme in Luke’s version. He situates Jesus very much in the tradition of the Israelite prophets by presenting him as quoting from the prophet Isaiah when announcing his programme in the synagogue at Nazareth. The focal point of this scene is the line “restoring of sight to the blind”. The theme of seeing is important in Luke’s Gospel, so we should be aware of that and all related terms, such as blindness. It is interesting that the evangelist talks about restoring sight to blind people: we might remember when listening to the Gospel extracts that Jesus is giving back vision to people who have lost it, rather than granting sight to people born without it. ■

## REFLECT

Jesus’ programme for his ministry is set very much in terms of liberation; his message is one of good news. He announces a jubilee year, one during which sin is forgiven, debts are cancelled and people are given the chance of a new start. At the heart of this mission is recovery of vision which has been lost, not necessarily through bad will but just through the daily round of ordinary life. We can become absorbed in the cares and worries of life and thoughts of faith and our relationship with God can be pushed to the back of our mind.

That is why our weekly celebration of the Eucharist is so important: it keeps our vision clear and reminds us of the person we would like to be and are trying to become.

Many people say that Luke’s version is their favourite Gospel. His picture of Jesus is gentle and accepting. At the same time, Luke is clear about the danger of wealth, that it can be an obstacle to being a disciple of Jesus. We know that we cannot survive without money and shelter, but Luke is asking us to keep a sense of proportion, to ask ourselves what is really important in our lives.

Perhaps the passage from Isaiah is telling us that our faith should be freeing, liberating and not a burden. There is a saying that ‘wherever the sea is, there is the taste of salt: wherever there is truth, there is the taste of freedom.’ As we consider the heart of Jesus’ message being “restoring of sight to the blind”, we might keep that in mind. ■

## SAY

Wherever there is the sea, there is the taste of salt: wherever there is truth, there is the taste of freedom.

(Quote from Thought for the Day)

## LEARN

Luke had access to the Gospel of Mark when writing his own account.

The central line of the section about Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth is “restoring of sight to the blind”:

This is a key idea in Luke’s account, along with that of the Spirit.



## DO

Take a good look around you: thank God for the gift of sight; think how your vision of faith and life might be restored – then ask for that!