



The Holy Scriptures
are our letters
from home

4th Sunday Ord. Time, Yr C

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Jesus is starting his public ministry, he has just announced at his home synagogue that the spirit of the Lord had sent and appointed him. He had been appointed to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah (i.e. Is 58:6, in last Sunday's text). This announcement was at first acclaimed by people of his home town. They could see that his words were authentic, gracious (i.e. grace filled). But then, they realize that Jesus is a local, one of them! They knew how he was brought up, as well as, what education, what cultural and religious experiences he had had! You don't just suddenly become a prophetic teacher! Had he gained these new expertise in some foreign, non-local experience or schooling?¹ The locals think: 'He must be a pretender!'

Luke records that Jesus had been teaching in their synagogues, Lk 4:15, but he has not yet performed any miracles.

► So, in our text, Luke deliberately uses the future tense² about miracles soon to be performed in Capernaum, the other city of the Galilee region. Jesus goes on to recall miracles of the prophets that were done in territories other than Israel. The people in the synagogue reacted negatively.³ They weren't going to be forced into anything; it offends their pride. Also, in selfishness, they thought they had a right to the first access to God's blessings, i.e. before other peoples or places. They couldn't see past the local man they thought they knew. They had got it so wrong! Jesus' miracles were performed not to force people to follow him but rather to deepen people's faith in his Messianic role as Saviour².

Read: Luke 4: 21 – 30

Meditatio: Am I supporting Jesus' work of bringing true freedom and fullness of life to the world? Do I trust and celebrate Jesus words? Do I accept Jesus as truly human and truly divine? Does what I say, truly represent, who I am? Do I live my faith mostly at church and seldom at home? Do I only look for people to inspire me who are outside of my home/parish and/or beyond my neighbourhood? Do I trust in the Lord when I am caught up in times of natural disaster, pandemic, famine or the like? Am I envious of others living in better conditions to mine? How do I react when people challenge me with hard truths about myself? Do I talk down, or try to get rid of, people who challenge me? For me, are there right and wrong times to face challenges? Have I had to walk away from, or be silent before, those who are set in their ways or understandings?

Oratio: Pray that we will co-operate with Jesus in bringing salvation to everyone. Pray in thanks for the grace filled words of God's Word, especially in the Gospels. Pray for truth and clarity in what we say and do. Pray that we will listen to those close to us and support them and celebrate their gifts and talents. Pray for people living in times of stress, disaster or oppression; may they never lose hope in God's love for them. Pray that people in developing countries will not be forgotten or ignored but truly have their share of the world's resources and technology. Pray that we will face challenges with honesty and without seeking revenge or pay back. Pray that we will never do things that will inflame disagreements or misunderstandings. Pray for peacemakers in the world; may war and oppression be eliminated. Pray that truly listening to one another will characterize our lives.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer – Be a good listener.

✍ Fr Joe

Luke 4: 21 – 30

Jesus began to speak in the synagogue, 'This text is being fulfilled even as you listen.' And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips.

They said, 'This is Joseph's son, surely?' But he replied, 'No doubt you will quote me the saying, "Physician, heal yourself" and tell me, "We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own countryside." And he went on, 'I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.'

'There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you in Elijah's day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman.'

When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

Notes:

1 Consider footnote on Mt 2:23 of Christian Community Bible, pastoral edn 1988, and my Lectio for 14th Sunday Ord Time Yr B (Mark 6: 1 – 6).

2 From ideas in the Jerome Biblical Commentary © 1968 Prentice-Hall, **44:56.23**.

3 These two reasons for rejecting Jesus are outlined towards the end of footnote to Lk 4:16 of Christian Community Bible, pastoral edn 1988, i.e. pride and selfishness.