

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

A door-to-door salesman from a publishing house asked a lady if she owned a copy of the Bible. "I certainly do!", she replied with some pride. To his next question, did she read it regularly, she responded, "Oh, yes!", and sent her little daughter to get the Bible from the table drawer. As she showed it to the man, her spectacles fell from between the pages. Without thinking, she exclaimed, "Oh, here are my glasses! I've been looking for these for 3 years!"

Dear Friends,

As we walk into ordinary time, the readings move us to listen to the word of God and its fulfillment to us. This is called the 'mission statement' or inaugural address of any ministry. It focuses our attention on the importance and liberating power of the Word of God and challenge us to listen to the Word, accept it into our hearts, then put it into practice as we live out our lives, thus liberating ourselves and others from all types of bondages.

Luke, in the Gospel, focused primarily on his gentile Christian audience and explained the liberating message to them, especially the political rivalry of imperial Rome. The birth account of Jesus gives us a picture that is contrary to the titles that Caesar claimed himself. Jesus starts his public ministry and his mission statement are strikingly different from those of empire Caesar. By reading this passage Jesus identified himself as Messiah.

In the first reading, After defeating Babylon, King Cyrus of Persia prompted by the Holy Spirit, decreed that the exiled Jews, who had spent seven decades of exile in Babylon, could return home to Jerusalem. The Jews who returned rebuilt their ruined Temple (Ezr 6:15-17) and finished rebuilding the city walls under Ezra the priest, their spiritual leader, and Nehemiah, the Governor appointed by Persia (Neh 6:15). The Lord gave an important mission to both men. They were to teach the law to their people. They all heard the word of God.

The second reading talks about unity among ourselves. Paul gives a beautiful analogy of our own body and how it coordinates and collaborates to live a stable life.

In both readings there was a great response. In the first reading, they all weep and shed tears and said, "Amen". It was turned into a celebration. In the Gospel, their eyes looked at Jesus intently. The word of God gave freedom to the people.

Today we are called to listen to the word and transform ourselves. How much importance do we give to the word of God?

What is our response when we read the word of God? We may all have Bibles at home. How many of us read the Bible on a regular basis?

We all use our phones or computers. I challenge you this week to take moment to find a Catholic Bible app that shares a passage daily with you and do a short three-minute reflection on the passage. Maybe this is the week that you will hear God speak to you through his word.