

January 27, 2019

Third Week in Ordinary Time



Readings for the week of January 27, 2019

Sunday: Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15 [cf. Jn 6:63c]/1 Cor 12:12-30 or 12:12-14, 27/Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21
Monday: Heb 9:15, 24-28/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6 [1a]/Mk 3:22-30
Tuesday: Heb 10:1-10/Ps 40:2 and 4ab, 7-8a, 10, 11 [8a and 9a]/Mk 3:31-35
Wednesday: Heb 10:11-18/Ps 110:1, 2, 3, 4 [4b]/Mk 4:1-20
Thursday: Heb 10:19-25/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 [cf. 6]/Mk 4:21-25
Friday: Heb 10:32-39/Ps 37:3-4, 5-6, 23-24, 39-40 [39a]/Mk 4:26-34
Saturday: Mal 3:1-4/Ps 24:7, 8, 9, 19 [8]/Heb 2:14-18/Lk 2:22-40 or Luke 2:22-32
Next Sunday: Jer 1:4-5, 17-19/Ps 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17 [cf. 15ab]/1 Cor 12:31—13:13 or 1 Cor 13:4-13/Lk 4:21-30

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...”

What Are My Gifts? How Am I to Use Them?

Third Week of Ordinary Time -1 Corinthians 12: 12-30- Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21

Today, St. Paul speaks of the many varied gifts that exist within the Body of Christ. This is the basis for a steward's way of life. What is God calling me to do with the gifts that God has bestowed upon me?

As a Christian, I am called to come to the spiritual understanding that my entire life is dependent on God. The very breath I breathe, the intelligence I possess, the skills I've learned and the virtues I express are all God-given. There is nothing that I do that has not been ordered and graced by the Creator. This does not mean that I lack free will. In fact, that is the point. I am free to use my gifts toward the greater good, or for selfish gain.

In a steward's way of living, nothing I have belongs to me. I live in a time and a culture that values "rugged individualism" which suggests that I am in complete command of my life. On the contrary, the Christian understanding of gifts and stewardship comes from the biblical grounding that nothing belongs to me. I have not "earned" anything. Everything is a gift, freely given to me by God, which is to be ordered to the good of the other and dedicated to the glory of God. So how do these gifts come to be?

The scriptures, this week, speak of the working of the Holy Spirit in all of our lives. Jesus encounters the Holy Spirit at his baptism and in his sojourn and temptation in the desert. This is the same Holy Spirit that came to each one of us at our baptism. It is the same Holy Spirit that empowers each of us to choose the good. And what good am I (we) to do? Jesus sums this up for us in the gospel today.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."

Scripture scholars have called this section, from the gospel of St. Luke, "the job description" for all Christians who wish to become stewards of their own gifts. As Christian stewards, we are challenged to proclaim the glory of God whose full-embodiment is found in Jesus Christ. We are called to do so by accepting our baptismal charge to bring the Good News to the poor. We are called to proclaim a liberty, a freedom, from the bonds of sin. We are called to open up the eyes of those who cannot yet see the great gift of Jesus. We are called to help others be freed from the oppression of poverty, injustice and personal demons. And in all of this work, we are to joyfully proclaim that everything we have done was first and foremost accomplished because of the work done in us through God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessings!


Sue Schettler