

In this Gospel we just heard, Jesus rolled up the scroll. People were watching, awaiting his commentary. He looked at them in sense said, "this is happening here right now." Jesus took the Scripture out of the context of the past and acting as if they were referring to their own times. He was speaking as if he were the anointed one. He was acting as if he believed it. This passage is aimed straight at today's Church, reminding us that Jesus' words are not comfort from the past but a program for today.

Jesus begins by saying that the power of the Holy Spirit is upon him. The Spirit is actually God's mission statement to the world, since prior to Jesus' coming, God's love in mission is first revealed by the Spirit's activity in creation. The Gospel says that the Spirit rests upon Jesus, who makes humanly visible and tangible the inner heart of God, who desires healing, wholeness, and jubilee justice. Luke says "the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently" at Jesus when he read from the prophet Isaiah. Could they see "God inside out" as he interpreted the Scripture passage as fulfilled in their hearing?

Similarly, in the first reading, Nehemiah stresses that all the people listened attentively as Ezra read forth the law and interpreted it for them. For our ancestors in the faith, it was through the law that the Spirit made known the inner heart of God. Nehemiah says "all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the law." He urges them not to be sad or weep but does not explain what caused their weeping.

In one way or another, Jesus' mission is of the restoration and release all mankind and proclaim a new time of jubilation. That mission is also ours and only if we are aware that we are parts that constitute unity in our diversity and Christ's body can we accomplished that mission. We might ask, using St. Paul's image: What part of Christ's Body are we? Are we part of His mind, teaching the faith? Are we part of His heart, showing the care of Christ? Are we part of His hands, reaching out to others? Are we part of His feet, taking the Gospel to different places? Are we part of His lips, speaking His truth?

Paul uses a vivid metaphor to describe the way the Christian community continues the mission of being "God inside out." The Spirit, as love in mission, creates unity and harmony within the very diverse body, where the many parts are all unique, precious, and equally important. The mission is especially focused on attending to those members who are the most vulnerable. As within the divine being, so within the united community of believers: every joy felt by one is shared by all, and every suffering is borne by all.