

Hom 3 C 2019

I think we can all imagine the scene we just heard about in the Gospel. Jesus enters the synagogue, opens up a scroll. Books used to be rolled up like a window shade. He reads a passage from the prophet Isaiah.

Jesus intends for you and me to be just as much the audience as those people way back in the first century. He is talking to us.

Here is the passage Jesus quotes:

“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” (Luke 4).

The poor here, the captives, the blind---Jesus is referring to us here. Jesus came to us and for us with a gift. The gift of Jesus’ spirit transforms our poverty, our captivity and our blindness into something new, something wonderful.

The poor. Jesus is not just talking about those who are materially poor. This is not just about low income or having less. It is about being less. Less than we were intended to be when God created us

Mother Teresa said and I quote:

“The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread but there are many more dying for a little love. The poverty in the West is a different kind of poverty -- it is not only a poverty of loneliness but also of spirituality. There's a hunger for love, as there is a hunger for God.” Book A Simple Path: Mother Teresa

You can have everything and have nothing. You can have all the beauty in the world and still feel ugly. You can have more money than you can ever spend and still be poverty stricken when it comes to faith or love or compassion.

Jesus sends his Holy Spirit into us and our poverty is transformed.

The blind. You and I are completely surrounded by God’s love and sometimes we find ourselves in a pit of darkness without joy, without peace, without wonder.

“God made the world for the delight of human beings-- if we could see His goodness everywhere, His concern for us, His awareness of our needs: the phone call we've waited for, the ride we are offered, the letter in the mail, just the little things He does for us throughout the day. As we remember and notice His love for us, we just begin to fall in

love with Him because He is so busy with us -- you just can't resist Him. I believe there's no such thing as luck in life, it's God's love." Mother Teresa
 Jesus sends his Holy Spirit into us and our blindness is transformed.

The captives. We can all be captives in one way or another, that is, held in bondage by our possessions, our fear, our lust, captives of our grief or our greed, captives of jealousy, captives of revenge. So many things can hold our spirits bound and in chains.
 Jesus sends his Holy Spirit into us and our captivity is transformed.

The spirit of God has come in Jesus precisely so he can enter our poverty, our blindness and our bondage. Jesus has a gift for us. His spirit.

This Jesus who is speaking to each of us in a personal way here is the Son of God and because he is the Son of God his promise to transform our poverty, our blindness and our captivity needs to be taken seriously.

“Examine the record for yourselves: Jesus claimed to have all authority—not some, but all authority—on earth and in heaven. He claimed the divine right of God to forgive sins. He allowed Himself to be worshiped as God by his disciples. He said he was from heaven and the people should show him the same respect they would show God. He said he would raise all humans from the grave one day and that he would sit in judgment over them. He said he would give everlasting life to all who trust in him. He said he never failed to please God and that he never sinned. And he said he would come again to earth a second time.

There really isn't any doubt about it. Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be (and truly is) Divine.” (Proclaim January 22, 1995 Parish Publications, Inc., 32401 Industrial Drive, Madison Heights, MI 48071)

And because Jesus is Divine his spirit can really transform our poverty, our blindness and our captivity and make us new again.

I would like to end with a prayer but I'm going to use first person singular I and me so we can each speak to Jesus as individuals as we say the prayer.

All praise and glory to you Jesus Christ.

Come forth Jesus and breathe your life into my heart.

Let the living water of your spirit order my life with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity,

Open the eyes of my soul so that I may see your blessings everywhere. Sanctify my vision.

Lift the chains that bind me. Help me to live for you and for others. Enrich my life with service. Help me to stand up and take my place with your people.

Come Holy Spirit, will it --that we become one. Amen.