

## Jesus' First Sermon in Nazareth (Part 1) (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C)

### **Nehemiah 8:2-4, 5-6, 8-10—Ezra Reads the Law to the People**

1. Ezra: priest and leader of the people after Babylonian Exile (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.).
2. Torah: the “law” refers to the law of Moses, esp. Deuteronomy (8:2)
3. Reading: from “early morning to midday” (8:3)!
4. Assembly: men, women, and children “who could understand” (8:3)
5. Standing: when he opened the Torah, “all the people stood” (8:5)
6. Prostration: “they worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground” (8:6)
7. Homily: the Levites “gave the sense, so that the people understood” (8:8)
8. Banquet: ends with feast of food and drink (“sweet wine”) (8:10)

### **Psalm 19—The Law of God**

1. Torah: “perfect,” “trustworthy,” “right,” “pure,” “clean,” “true” (vv. 7-9)

### **1 Corinthians 12:12-30—The Body of Christ**

1. One “Body” (Greek *sōma*) of Christ: has “many members” (12:12)

### **Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21—the Beginning of Luke’s Gospel and Jesus’ First Sermon**

1. Historical Prologue: to Luke’s Gospel (1:1-4)
  - a. Previous Gospels: “many” have undertaken (e.g., Mark, Matthew?)
  - b. Eyewitnesses: based on “eyewitnesses” (Greek *autoptai*)
  - c. Accuracy: an “orderly” or “accurate” (Greek *akribōs*) account
  - d. Truth: that you might know the “certainty” (Greek *asphaleia*)
  - e. Catechesis: you have been “informed” (Greek *katēcheō*) (1 Cor 14:19; Gal 6:6)
2. Jesus’ First Sermon in Nazareth (4:14-21)
  - a. Synagogue: Jewish gathering place (Greek *synagōgē*)
  - b. Sabbath = 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week, Saturday (not Sunday!)
  - c. Isaiah Scroll: given to Jesus to read and preach (cf. Isaiah 61:1-4)
  - d. Messiah: he has “anointed” me (Greek *chriō*) (4:18)
  - e. Good News: to preach “good news” to the poor and captive (4:18)
  - f. Jubilee: “the acceptable year of the LORD” (4:19; cf. Leviticus 25)
  - g. Fulfillment: “today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (4:21)

### **The Living Tradition**

Origen of Alexandria: “Every eye in the synagogue was fixed upon him.” Here too in this synagogue, that is in this present assembly, you can at this very moment fix your eyes upon your Savior if you wish. Whenever you direct your inward gaze toward wisdom and truth and the contemplation of God’s only Son, then your eyes are fixed upon Jesus. Blessed was that congregation of which the gospel says, “All eyes in the synagogue were fixed upon him!” How I long for our own assembly to deserve the same testimony; for all

of you, catechumens as well as the faithful, men, women, children, to have your eyes, not those of the body but of the soul, turned toward Jesus! When you look at Jesus your own faces will become radiant with his reflected glory... (Origen, *Homilies the Gospel of Luke*, 32.2-6; trans. E. Barnecutt, p. 75).

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. What was it like to attend the assembly of Scripture readings at the time of Ezra? What similarities and differences are there with the contemporary Catholic liturgy of the Word?

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2. Why do they hand the book of Isaiah to Jesus to read in the Synagogue when Jesus is just a layman?

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3 How does Jesus fulfill the prophecy of the Messiah in Isaiah 61?

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### For Further Study

1. Pablo Gadenz. *The Gospel of Luke*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 97-104.
2. Edith Barnecut, *Journey with the Fathers: Commentaries on the Sunday Gospels Year C* (Hyde Park: New City Press, 1994), 74-75.