

# Link to Liturgy



## 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time The Time is Now

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### Lessons and Discussions

#### **Page 5 – Anointing**

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me”*

#### **Page 8 – Kingdom of the Poor**

*“to bring glad tidings to the poor.”*

#### **Page 12 – Spiritual Reading**

*“found the passage where it was written”*

**Communion Antiphon – Roman Missal**

*This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.*

*Comedite pinguia*

*2 Esd 8: 10*

VIII

**G** O, eat rich meat, and drink sweet wine,\* and send

portions to those who have prepared nothing for them-

selves; this is a ho-ly day in honor of the Lord; do not

be sad; for the joy of the Lord is our strength.

**Alternate options:**

- Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation
- Praise to the Lord
- Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
- Big Gulp (Remnant)
- Light of the World (Remnant)
- Take the Plunge (Remnant)

**Collect – Roman Missal**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

Almighty ever-living God,  
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,  
that in the name of your beloved Son  
we may abound in good works.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

**Gospel Reading – Luke 1:1-4; 4: 14-21– Roman Missal**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke  
- Glory to you O Lord

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eye-witnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all.

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

*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.*

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

The Gospel of the Lord.  
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

**Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time**

*From the constitution on the sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council*

*Christ is present to his Church*

Christ is always present to his Church, especially in the actions of the liturgy. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, in the person of the minister (it is the same Christ who formerly offered himself on the cross that now offers by the ministry of priests) and most of all under the Eucharistic species. He is present in the sacraments by his power, in such a way that when someone baptizes, Christ himself baptizes. He is present in his word, for it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church. Finally, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for he himself promised: *Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst.*

Indeed, in this great work which gives perfect glory to God and brings holiness to men. Christ is always joining in partnership with himself his beloved Bride, the Church, which calls upon its Lord and through him gives worship to the eternal Father.

It is therefore right to see the liturgy as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ, in which through signs addressed to the senses man's sanctification is signified and, in a way proper to each of these signs, made effective, and in which public worship is celebrated in its fullness by the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the head and by his members.

Accordingly, every liturgical celebration, as an activity of Christ the priest and of his body, which is the Church, is a sacred action of a preeminent kind. No other action of the Church equals its title to power or its degree of effectiveness.

In the liturgy on earth we are given a foretaste and share in the liturgy of heaven, celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem, the goal of our pilgrimage, where Christ is *seated at the right hand of God, as minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle.* With the whole company of heaven we sing a hymn of praise to the Lord; as we reverence the memory of the saints, we hope to have some part with them, and to share in their fellowship; *we wait for the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, until he, who is our life, appears, and we appear with him in glory.*

By an apostolic tradition taking its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day, the day that is rightly called the Lord's day. On Sunday the Christian faithful ought to gather together, so that

**“The End” Notes**

- [1] The Navarre Bible: St. Luke pg. 74
- [2] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 28
- [3] CCC 1293
- [4] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 28
- [5] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 28
- [6] CCC1294
- [7] CCC 695
- [8] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 27
- [9] St. Irenaeus, Adv. Haeres., 3, 18, 3: PG 7/1, 934
- [10] CCC 698
- [11] cf. Divine Intimacy, Vol. I pg. 173
- [12] Divine Intimacy, Vol. I pg. 173
- [13] John Paul II, Dives in misericordia, 3
- [14] cf. The Navarre Bible: St. Luke pg. 74
- [15] CCC 543
- [16] Romans 10:5
- [17] Isaiah 52:7
- [18] Tuesday Vespers – Week I
- [19] Liturgy of the Hours – Benedictus (Canticle of Zechariah)
- [20] Revelation 22:4-5
- [21] John 8:33-34
- [22] Isaiah 49:8
- [23] 2 Corinthians 6:2-3
- [24] CCC 544
- [25] Matthew 5:3
- [26] cf. The Navarre Bible: St. Luke pg. 74
- [27] Catena Aurea
- [28] Matthew 12:29
- [29] Lumen Gentium, 8
- [30] Penny Catechism – Daily Spiritual Exercises
- [31] CCC 545
- [32] The Navarre Bible: St. Luke pg. 75
- [33] Mt. 28:19-20
- [34] cf. CCC 546
- [35] The Navarre Bible: St. Luke pg. 75
- [36] J. Escriva, Homily on the Supernatural Aim of the Church
- [37] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 517
- [38] Fernandez, In conversation with God, 3, 18.1
- [39] St. Augustine, Commentary on St. John's Gospel, 30
- [40] St. John Chrsostom, Catena Aurea, III, pg. 78
- [41] Fernandez, In conversation with God, 3, 18.1
- [42] Fernandez, In conversation with God, 3, 18.2
- [42] Baron, Catholicism pg. 228

**Marian Antiphon – Divine Office (Sunday Compline)**

V. **A** L-ma \* Red-emptó-ris Ma-ter, quæ pérv-i-a cæ-li Por-  
ta manes, et stella ma-ris, succúrr-e cadénti, Súrg-e-re qui  
cu-rat, pópulo: Tu quæ genu- ísti, Na-tú-ra mi-ránte, tu-um  
sanctum Ge-ni-tó-rem, Virgo pri-us ac posté-ri us, Gabri- é-  
lis ab o-re Sumens il-lud Ave, pecca-tó-rum mi-se-ré-re.

**Alma Redemptoris Mater (English Translation)**

Loving mother of the Redeemer, open door to heaven and star of the sea, come quickly to the aid of thy people, fallen indeed but striving to stand again. To nature's astonishment thou wert the mother of thy holy Creator without ceasing to be a virgin, and heard from Gabriel that greeting: "Hail." Have pity on us sinners.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.  
R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made know by the message of an angel may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen

by listening to the word of God and sharing in the Eucharist they may recall the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God who *has given them a new birth with a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. The Lord's day is therefore the first and greatest festival, one to be set before the loving devotion of the faithful and impressed upon it, so that it may be also a day of joy and of freedom from work. Other celebrations must not take precedence over it, unless they are truly of the greatest importance, since it is the foundation and the kernel of the whole liturgical year.

**Responsory – Office of Readings**

Christ prays for us: he is our priest; he prays in us: he is our head; we pray to him: he is our God.

–Let us be ever aware, then, of our prayer in him, and his prayer in us.

When we turn to God in prayer, we must not separate ourselves from his Son.

– Let us be ever aware, then, of our prayer in him, and his prayer in us.

**Anointing – Lesson and Discussion**

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me"*

Anointing is not as prevalent in our current society as it once was. So when Jesus reads that He is the "anointed one" this is profound. We carry on the significance of anointing through our Sacraments and the meaning behind anointing.

**Which reading does Jesus use? Why does this matter when it comes to anointing?** The passage Jesus read was from Isaiah 61:1-2. In it, the prophet proclaims the coming of the Anointed, who would free his people of their afflictions. "In Christ this prophecy finds its fulfillment, for He is the Anointed, the Messiah whom God has sent to his people in their tribulation. Jesus has been anointed by the Holy Spirit for the mission the Father has entrusted to him." [1] In the Sunday Gospel's preceding the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary time, we have seen Jesus's divinity manifested through the Adoration of the Magi, the Baptism of the Lord, and the Wedding at Cana. His divine nature continues to be revealed and prophecies fulfilled as Jesus reads the text of Isaiah in the synagogue.

[See also [Link to Liturgy Lesson Messianic Fulfillment](#)]

**What is anointing?** Anointing means, “Literally the pouring of oil on someone or some thing in a religious ceremony.”[2] “Anointing, in Biblical and other ancient symbolism, is rich in meaning: oil is a sign of abundance and joy; it cleanses (anointing before and after a bath) and limbers (the anointing of athletes and wrestlers); oil is a sign of healing, since it is soothing to bruises and wounds; and it makes radiant with beauty, health, and strength.”[3]

**What was the biblical purpose of anointing?** “Its biblical purpose was to make sacred the object anointed. Thus kings were anointed (1Samuel 10:1), priests (Exodus 28:41), and prophets (1 Kings 19:16). The reference to anointing in the New Testament as a sacred rite pertains to the sacrament of anointing the sick, but the verb here used (James 5:14), *aleipho*, is unique. It therefore has a different meaning from ‘to make sacred,’ as elsewhere in the Bible.”[4]

**How is anointing used in the Catholic Church?** Anointing with oils is still used today in the church. The most common place we find them is in the sacraments. “In the Catholic Church, holy oils are used in the administration of the three sacraments, which impart a permanent character (baptism, confirmation, and holy orders) and with a different purpose, in the anointing of the sick. Oil is used in the blessing of altars, bells, and sacred vessels. There are also a number of blessed oils, e.g., in honor of St. Serapion (fourth century), that are used as sacramental.”[5]

[See also [Link to Liturgy Lesson Holy Oils](#)]

**What does anointing signify in the three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders?** “Anointing with oil has all these meanings in the sacramental life. The pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of catechumens signifies cleansing and strengthening; the anointing of the sick expresses healing and comfort. The post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in Confirmation and ordination is the sign of consecration. By Confirmation Christians, that is, those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off ‘the aroma of Christ.’”[6]

**What does anointing with oil symbolize?** Anointing of oil signifies the Holy Spirit, “to the point of becoming a synonym for

our lives like our husbands, wives, and children.

**What is the impact of spiritual reading?** There can be great fruit that bears from spiritual reading. Many of the great Saints had their conversion through spiritual reading. Saint Augustine converted by reading the Bible. Saint Ignatius of Loyola converted by reading the Life of the Saints. In 1938, Thomas Merton walked down fifth Avenue and bought a book he saw in the window called *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* by Etienne Gilson. He was taking classes at Columbia, and thought it would help with his studies. When read the book was approved by the Catholic Church he almost threw it away. He was at that time resistant to the Church. “However, ‘by a special grace,’ he kept the book and actually read it. It revolutionized his life.”[43] He later converted to Catholicism, became a priest, a monk, and one of the greatest scholars and philosophers of the twentieth century. Many have been brought to the truth of Christ and His Church through the reason and common sense of modern writers such as C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterton. C.S. Lewis, who was an atheist was inspired to embrace Christianity by one of G.K. Chesterton’s books *The Everlasting Man*. Spiritual Reading not only brings about conversion, but those that are converted write about their conversion which then become the spiritual reading for others and thus perpetuates conversion of souls. **What writings (Biblical or Non-Biblical) have brought about a conversion to you? What scripture verses have really stuck with you?**

**Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – A prayer before the reading of any part of Holy Scripture**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Come Holy Ghost, fill the hearts and minds of the faithful servants, and inflame them with the fire of Thy divine love. Let us pray: O God, who by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, didst instruct the hearts of thy faithful servants; grant us in the same Spirit, to discern what is right, and enjoy His comfort forever, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth, one God, with Thee and the same Spirit, world without end. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

enemies of the Faith, and to know how to present them in an attractive way, (nothing being gained by over-reaction, heated argument or bad humour), with clarity (without water down important issues) and with precision (without sounding hesitantly uncertain.)”[42].

**What should we do if we have learned everything?** This is impossible. No one can learn *everything* about God. Using simple logic; if one claims to know everything about God then they are either God or that God is not infinite. It takes our entire life to learn, read, and study our faith. Sadly, many in our society see religion like school; we try to learn facts, equations, dates, etc. all to pass a test, receive a certificate and graduate. In our faith we never “graduate”. The capacity of our minds and souls are stretched, becoming larger and we continue to dive deeper. Let us take a loose analogy like the iPhone or iPad. Everyone knows Apple will come out with a new one usually every 12-18 months. Millions of people wait for it, purchase it, and then cannot wait for the next one. They never grow tired of it. We should never grow tired of our faith. We should always remain hungry for the next discovery we make in our faith that God wants to reveal to us.

**TV SHOW – Saturday Night Live: iPhone – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:34**

<http://www.nbc.com/saturday-night-live/video/weekend-update-iphone-special/1156897/>

A better analogy is one of a married couple. When asking a married couple who have been together for thirty, forty, fifty or more years many couples say they have fallen even more in love with each other. How can this be? There are many reasons, but mostly it surrounds the fact that the two have become one flesh and they have continued to reveal and find out more and more about this person. God continues to bloom in our hearts if we continue to love Him more and more. We can continue to unite ourselves with God becoming one with Him as He continues to reveal more of His beauty to us.

**MUSIC – “I Thought I Loved You Then” by Brad Paisley – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 4:18**

<http://youtu.be/2tUPHIUCIIM>

The song speaks of a love for a woman. We must understand once we see our faith as the most important thing in our lives we can truly love God more deeply, and those whom He places in

the Holy Spirit. In Christian initiation, anointing is the sacramental sign of Confirmation, called ‘chrismation’ in the Churches of the East. Its full force can be grasped only in relation to the primary anointing accomplished by the Holy Spirit, that of Jesus. Christ (in Hebrew ‘messiah’) means the one ‘anointed’ by God’s Spirit. There were several anointed ones of the Lord in the Old Covenant, pre-eminently King David. But Jesus is God’s Anointed in a unique way: the humanity the Son assumed was entirely anointed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit established him as ‘Christ.’ The Virgin Mary conceived Christ by the Holy Spirit who, through the angel, proclaimed him the Christ at his birth, and prompted Simeon to come to the temple to see the Christ of the Lord. The spirit filled Christ and the power of the Spirit went out from him in his acts of healing and of saving. Finally, it was the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead. Now, fully established as ‘Christ’ in his humanity victorious over death, Jesus pours out the Holy Spirit abundantly until ‘the saints’ constitute – in their union with the humanity of the Son of God – that perfect man ‘to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’: ‘the whole Christ,’ in St. Augustine’s expression.”[7]

**What does “Christ” mean?** Christ means, “anointed one”. “The meaning of ‘Christ,’ derived from the Greek Christos, corresponding to the Hebrew Mashijah (Messiah)”[8] In a deeper way it shows Jesus’ divinity, “for the name ‘Christ’ implies ‘he who anointed,’ ‘he who was anointed’ and ‘the very anointing with which he was anointed.’ The one who anointed is the Father, the one who was anointed is the Son, and he was anointed with the Spirit who is the anointing,”[9]

**What are the effects of anointing?** We are sealed by Christ. At our Confirmation the Bishop says, “Be *sealed* with the Holy Spirit.” “The *seal* is a symbol close to that of anointing. The Father has set his seal on Christ and also seals us in him. Because this seal indicates the indelible effect of the anointing with the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, the image of the seal (sphragis) has been used in some theological traditions to express the indelible ‘character’ imprinted by these three unrepeatable sacraments.”[10]

**VIDEO – How to make a wax seal – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:25**

The video shows how to make a modern seal using wax. As the boy shows there are different styles and ways to do this. God

seals our souls all the same through the Sacraments, but his imprint is unique and different just as these seals can be.

### **Kingdom of the Poor – Lesson and Discussion**

*“to bring glad tidings to the poor.”*

The readings for the third Sunday speak of the return of a kingdom. The first reading comes from the book of Nehemiah where the people of God hear the proclamation of the divine law after their return from the Babylonian exile.[11] “The Gospel gives us another proclamation of the word, more modest in its external form, but in reality infinitely more solemn...Jesus opened the book of Isaiah and read – certainly not by chance – the passage that concerned his mission: ‘The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...’”[12] “These phrases, according to Luke (vv. 18-19), are his first messianic declaration. They are followed by the actions and words known through the Gospel. By these actions and words Christ makes the Father present among men”[13].

**Why is Jesus allowed to speak in the synagogue?** It was custom for the president to invite someone up who was well versed in the Scriptures to address one of the readings; the book of the Law, the Pentateuch, and another from the Prophets. Sometimes a volunteer would be allowed to give the address, which probably happen in Jesus’ case.[14]

**Who is called to this kingdom?** *“Everyone is called to enter the kingdom...To enter it, one must first accept Jesus’ word...”*[15] His word is the word we hear in today’s gospel reading when he reads from the book of Isaiah. *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.* In the Baptism of the Lord, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in bodily form, now we are told what will happen because the Spirit of the Lord is upon Christ. Do we accept the words of Christ given below?

**Jesus will bring glad tidings** – Do we accept the good news of Jesus Christ, the Gospel? We can read the Gospel daily as given to us by the readings of the Catholic Church. At the least we are obligated to attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Days of obligation to listen attentively to the Gospel. These glad tidings increase in us the theological virtue of Hope. In a world wrapped up in sad tidings, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring

and bishops, the writings and lives of the saints, and all other forms of composition whose avowed purpose as writing is to enlighten the mind and inspire the will and affections to the worship and service of God.”[37]

**Why should we read Sacred Scripture or other spiritual reading?** St. Jerome says, “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” “God’s greatest enemy in the world is ignorance, ‘the cause, and as it were, the root of all the evils that poison entire nations and perturb many souls.’”[38] How are we suppose to know our Lord if we do not listen to Him? St. Augustine writes, “We should hear the Gospel as if Our Lord were present and speaking to us.”[39] The more we read the word of God or words about God, the more we understand God.

Along with ignorance, Saint John Chrysostom said often, “Ignorance is often the daughter of laziness.”[40] When we are lazy we try to find a shortcut or easy way. Sometimes, this can lead us down an incorrect path. There are many heresies and errors that have come up, and many people have left Catholicism due to these grave sins. We must not lack in our doctrinal formation. “What a pity if we, because we lack the necessary doctrine, cannot show Christ to them and give them the light they need in order to understand his teaching!”[41]

**What should we read for spiritual reading?** Everyone is at different stages in their spirituality. Wherever a person is will determine what spiritual reading should be read. There are many great books out there to read, and at the same time many books that are in error and should not be read. The principle things we can suggest would be first and foremost the Bible; More specifically, a Bible that has been approved by the Catholic Church. There are four translations approved by the Catholic Church (New American, New American Revised Edition, New Jerusalem, Douay-Rheims). Also, the Catechism of the Catholic is great for spiritual formation. It is strongly recommended to speak to a priest, or a personal spiritual director for guidance in choosing the right books or readings based on that person’s educational background, spirituality, and theological formation.

**Why should we read those books?** Besides knowing God better, we will be able to answer the tough questions that are brought up. We will be able to bring the Church to all we meet in a positive, clear, and understanding way. “A Christian needs to have the answers which enable him to counter the attacks of the

**How does the Church carry on the mission of Christ?** The Church carries on by making disciples of all nations, “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”[33]

**How do we carry on Christ’s mission?** We are invited to come into the kingdom and we seek to help others into the kingdom. The Our Father prayer with the words, “Thy kingdom come” is a part of nearly every liturgy in the Church, and should serve as a reminder of our own call to enter the kingdom as well as the call to invite others into the kingdom. However, we are asked to do a radical thing: to gain the kingdom, one must give everything.[34] We must be willing to give up everything for Jesus in order to carry on His mission. “We are obligated to preach the truths of faith, the need for sacramental life, the promise of Christ’s continual assistance to his Church. One cannot be faithful to our Lord if one neglects these supernatural demands – to receive instruction in Christian faith and morality and to make use of the sacraments. It is the same instructions Jesus gives to the Church.”[35] “...Let us reject any purely naturalistic view that fails to value the supernatural role of divine grace. Let us reject materialistic opinions that exclude spiritual values from human life. Let us equally reject any secularizing theory which attempts to equate the aims of the Church with those of earthly States, distorting its essence, institutions and activities into something similar to those of temporal society.”[36]

### **Spiritual Reading – Lesson and Discussion**

*“found the passage where it was written”*

In the gospel reading, Jesus reads from the scriptures. This was the custom for all the people to hear the Word of God. We carry that tradition on at every Mass when we read from the scriptures of the Holy Bible. This however, should never be the extent of us reading or hearing the Word of God. One of the main foundations of our Church rests on Sacred Scripture. We should continue our spiritual growth by reading more spiritual works.

**What is spiritual reading?** “As the Lectio Divina prescribed in monasticism from the earliest times, it is all reading that is conducive to prayer and closer union with God. The Sacred Scriptures have always held the primacy of honor in such reading, along with writings of the Church’s teachers; notably, the popes

good news!”[16] Saint Paul is quoting the prophet Isaiah who says, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation...”[17]

**Proclaim liberty to captives** – Jesus liberates both physical and spiritual captivity. In the intercessions of Liturgy of the Hours we pray, “You [Jesus] made captive our captivity, to our brothers who are enduring bodily or spiritual chains, grant the freedom of the sons of God.”[18] Do we allow Jesus and trust Jesus to liberate us from spiritual and physical captivity?

**Recovery of sight from the Blind** – Jesus, the light of the world, enables us to see clearly. When we have deprived our soul of the light of Christ and begin to live in the darkness and shadows of death, it is Jesus Himself that is our recovery. This is why Saint Zachariah says, “In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”[19] The imagery of “the shadow of death” is powerful. If we were walking on a sunny day and we suddenly see a shadow of a person appear near our own shadow, we would know that a person is near us. Those who dwell in the shadow of death, means that death is near. Humanity was in the “shadow of death”, eternal death. This eternal death or hell is described in the gospels as eternal darkness. It is Christ who offers us eternal light, eternal life. Each Sunday night in Liturgy of the Hours we are reminded of our recovery from blindness, and the hope we have of eternal life and light. “They shall see the Lord face to face and bear his name on their foreheads. The night shall be no more. They will need no light from lamps or the sun, for the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever.”[20]

**The oppressed go free** – This verse goes along with the liberty to the captives. In the Gospel of John the descendants of Abraham (the Jews) ask Jesus, “How can you say, ‘You will become free?’” “Jesus answered them, ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. A slave does not remain in a household forever, but a son always remains. So if a son frees you, then you will truly be free.’”[21] By our baptism we are made sons and daughters of God. We now have a right to heaven, and a right to remain in the household of God. The household of God on earth is the Church, established by Jesus Christ himself; when we sin we separate our self from Christ and His

Body the Church. Freedom comes by remaining in the household of God, by living out our Baptismal vows of rejecting sin and embracing the Gospel. We are reminded of this call to reject evil and pursue good each Ash Wednesday when ashes are placed on our foreheads, but we are also reminded of this basic truth at every Mass, when we pray the Confiteor (reject evil, repent from sin) and profess the Creed (pursue good, embrace the Gospel).

**Proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord** – Isaiah says, “Thus says the Lord: In a time of favor I answer you, on the day of salvation I help you...”[22] Saint Paul in his letter to the Corinthians quotes Isaiah and says, “Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”[23]

**Who does the kingdom belong to?** The Catechism teaches us, “The kingdom belongs to the poor and lowly, which means those who have accepted it with humble hearts. Jesus is sent to ‘preach good news to the poor’; he declares them blessed, for ‘theirs is the kingdom of heaven. To them – the ‘little ones’ – the Father is pleased to reveal what remains hidden from the wise and the learned. Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst, and privation. Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom.”[24] The poor in spirit are those that realized that they need God. Just as the physically poor know that they need food, drink, clothes, shelter, etc., the poor in spirit know that they need glad tidings, liberty, sight, and salvation. **What is the blessing for the poor in spirit?** Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”[25]

**What does the poor refer to?** The poor Jesus refers to both spiritual poverty and to physical poverty.

**Spiritual poverty; sin.** To bring the goods means to bring freedom from our poverty of sin. God has taken great pity on us. He has come to free us from the blindness and oppression of sin. [26] St. John Chrysostom teaches, “Captivity can be felt when it proceeds from physical enemies, but the spiritual captivity referred to here is worse: sin exerts a more severe tyranny, evil takes control and blinds those who lend it obedience; from this spiritual prison Jesus Christ rescued us.”[27] In scripture Satan is referred to as a strong man who has held us (humanity) captive. Jesus says, “How can anyone enter a strong man’s house

and steal his property, unless he first ties up the strong man?”[28] The house of Satan is the world and his property is humanity, which he held in captivity by original sin. It is Jesus, the Word, made Flesh that enters the house (world), ties up the strong man (through His passion, death, and resurrection), and steals back the property (humanity) that is rightly God’s from the beginning.

**Physical poverty and/or suffering.** Christ came into this world to heal our bodies and souls. We read throughout the gospels of Jesus healing people. “Similarly, the Church encompasses with her love all those who are afflicted by human misery and she recognizes in those who are poor and who suffer, the image of her poor and suffering Founder. She does all in her power to relieve their need and in them she strives to serve Christ.”[29] It is Christ through His passion and death, who teaches all of humanity how to suffer. He teaches us the redemptive power of suffering. When the Christian who is connected to Christ, connect his suffering with that of Christ, suffering becomes redemptive and salvific in nature. “When God sends us any cross, or sickness, or pain, we should say, ‘Lord, you will be done. I take this for my sins.’”[30]

**[See also Link to Liturgy Packet - You did it to Me]**

**Who does Jesus invite to the table of the kingdom?** Jesus invites *sinners* to the table of the kingdom. “He invites them to that conversion without which one cannot enter the kingdom, but shows them in word and deed his Father’s boundless mercy for them and the vast ‘joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.’ The supreme proof of his love will be the sacrifice of his own life ‘for the forgiveness of sins.’”[31]

**If Jesus came to end sin and suffering, why is there still suffering?** It is true Jesus cured many souls by casting out demons and healing many sick, but He did not cure every sick person. Moreover, Jesus did not eliminate suffering for everyone nor for Himself. Sin, which entered into this world by man, has a permanent place in this world. However, Christ shows us the way to take suffering and make it have redemptive value when we unite ourselves to His sufferings. “Therefore, Christ worked miracles not so much to release the people concerned from suffering, as to demonstrate that he had a God-given mission to bring everyone eternal redemption.”[32] The Church, founded by Christ carries on His mission.