**3rd Sunday of the Year**

Today’s readings challenge us to hear, read and put into practice the saving and liberating word of God, thus transforming our lives and to convey the salvation and liberation of Christ to others around us through our renewed lives.

The Second Reading, taken from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, reminds us that “*together we are Christ’s Body, but each of us is a different part of it.”* This suggests that, as different parts of Christ’s Body, each of us has a share, as instruments in God’s hands, in bringing the freeing and saving mission of Christ to our world in our times.

  Today’s Gospel describes how, on a Sabbath, Jesus stood before the people in the synagogue of his hometown, Nazareth, reading and interpreting what Isaiah had prophesied about the Messiah and his mission. Jesus claims that he is the One sent "*to bring glad tidings to the poor, liberation to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and freedom for the oppressed".*

Jesus’ mission is still to give liberation to everyone who will listen to his “Good News,” accept it and put it into practice. Luke reports that surprise and admiration were the initial reactions of the people who were astonished at the power and eloquence of Jesus.

*We need to receive Christ’s freedom, live it out, and pass it on to others:* As members of Christ’s Mystical Body, we share in the freeing, saving mission of Jesus. However, even after we have chosen to believe in him, to accept his teachings and to live them out in our lives, we are still in bondage. We are captives of sin, and only Christ can set us free. Pride and prejudice can make us blind to the needs of the less-fortunate, prompting us to fear and avoid them, rather than to love and help them. We can also be blind to the presence of God within ourselves and others.  We are often not free to listen to a lonely, heart-broken neighbor.  We can be prisoners of materialism and consumerism, chained to pleasure, power, money and control of everyone and everything in our world. So, we need to be freed and brought closer to God. Once we receive true liberation from Christ, we need to share it with those we encounter in our daily lives - in our families, communities, parishes and workplaces.

We need to let the power of the Holy Spirit fill us, and to be ready to have miracles done through us. Today’s Gospel tells us that Jesus performed miracles because he was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.  Jesus promised the same Spirit to his disciples: “*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever “the Spirit of truth”.  He lives with you and will be in you”* (John 14:16-17).  To this very day, the Holy Spirit is available to all believers who sincerely ask Him to dwell in their hearts.  If we fail to receive, and to use, His power and His gifts, then, we are left with nothing but our natural abilities and we will be unable to be used as instruments in His freeing miracles. Miracles happen every day through weak human instruments, although they may be less spectacular than the ones Jesus performed. People whose minds are filled with fear and hatred, can be miraculously replaced with peace and kindness. Those whose hearts are crippled with bitterness and anger can be made gentle and peaceful. Perhaps others, whose relationships with their spouses are strained, can be   miraculously healed by love and faithfulness. These are true miracles, performed by the power of God, through the Holy Spirit, often making use of human instruments. Let us be ready to become Spirit-filled instruments of Christ’s saving freedom.

We need to make Bible reading as a part of our daily Christian life. Bible reading enables us to know Jesus more and to love him better. That is why; we should set apart a time in the morning and in the evening to read a part of the Bible. This reading should be an integral part of the evening family prayer. Children should be encouraged to read the Bible with the adults explaining to them what they read. We need to read the Scriptures as books inspired by God that teach us about God and how we should live our lives. We also need to ask for God’s grace to interpret, what we read. God give us inspiration so that we may understand the text and apply its lessons fruitfully to our lives. Five or ten minutes each day will make it possible to read the entire New Testament easily at least twice each year.