

SCC REFLECTION: 3rd Sunday Year C. Lk. Fr Donal McIlraith

Luke Text. Lk 1:1-4. 4:14-21

Luke : 1

[1] Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us,

[2] just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word,

[3] it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

[4] that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.

[4:14] And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning him went out through all the surrounding country.

[15] And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

[16] And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read;

[17] and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

[18] "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

[19] to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

[20] And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

[21] And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Reflection.

1. We are in the Year of Luke and this Sunday begin reading Luke's Gospel. We read Luke's introduction. Then we skip the infancy Narratives, the stories about Jesus' childhood, and his baptism and temptation and continue reading with his first day of ministry at Nazareth, Jesus' own village.
2. Luke begins with a preface in which he explains why he has written this Gospel. He wrote it to give an accurate account of

the life of Jesus. Before Luke wrote his account there were others, eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word, who told the story and preached it. Preaching came before writing. Luke now wants to write down what has been preached. The eyewitnesses could have been Our Lady, the Apostles and others, like Zacchaeus, who knew Jesus, Theophilus means one whom God loves.

3. The Spirit had come upon Jesus at his baptism and after this and the 40 days in the desert, Jesus returns and begins preaching in Galilee. He preached in the Synagogues, and everyone praised him. Luke then cuts to his first homily on Nazareth on a Sabbath. The Sabbath, Saturday, was a day of rest for the Jews. They gathered together in the Synagogue to read the scriptures and be instructed in them. They start with prayer, the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-8, Hear o Israel, you must love the Lord your God with...) and the 18 blessings. Then a passage was read from the Law, (the Torah, the Pentateuch), the first five books and this was followed by a reading from the Prophets. The president then could ask someone to address them on the passages read. The gathering ended with the priestly blessing (Num 6:22ff). On this occasion it was Jesus who read from the prophet Isaiah. He opened the scroll to Isaiah 61:1-2 and read and commented on this.
4. By reading Isa 61:1-2 Jesus announces that he is the Messiah filled with the Holy Spirit and that these verses show the mission that God, his Father, has given him. He was filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, but the Fathers remind us that, as God's son, he had the Spirit from the moment of his Incarnation. Isaiah in 61:1-2 says that the Lord himself will come and free people from their afflictions. By announcing that "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" Jesus is implicitly claiming to be the Lord who will bring good news to the poor, blind, captives and oppressed. In his subsequent ministry. Luke will show us how Jesus carried out this mandate,

Next week: Lk 1:1-4. 4:14-21