

January 24, 2016 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
You are the Body of Christ!

Nehemiah 8:2-6,8-10 Psalm 19:8-10,15

1Corinthians 12:12-30

Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

In the first reading the priest and scribe Ezra brought the law and read it to the people from dawn to midday, interpreting the passages as he went along. The people responded with, "Amen!, Amen!" The listeners are told that rejoicing in the Lord is to be their strength.

The psalmist describes the law as perfect, trustworthy, clear, pure, true, and enlightening. It refreshes the soul, gives wisdom to the simple, enlightens the eye, and causes rejoicing in the heart. He asks that the words of his mouth and the thoughts of his heart find favor with the Lord, his rock, his redeemer.

In the second reading Paul makes an analogy of the Christian community to the body of Christ. Each part has its place and function and even the least is indispensable. It is stressed that everyone is important and dissension has no place in the community. God set up apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, assistants, and administrators. All are important and have their individual giftedness.

In the Gospel Luke describes how Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. His teaching brought great praise from the people and his reputation quickly spread. In Nazareth he read from the scroll of Isaiah, and said the passage was fulfilled in their hearing.

**The Father sent us the Son,
Who lived and taught in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

The theme of our readings points to each member of our community as a needed part of the body of Christ. We have our duties and functions and each of us was baptized into the body by the Holy Spirit. Think for a moment of the importance of every part of your body. A hangnail, a stubbed toe, a headache or a sore throat can easily throw your day out of kilter. Now think of the members of your spiritual community. If even the least are not participating as they should then the community will somehow suffer. We need to encourage, affirm, and build up everyone's giftedness for the good of all.

The Christian community is very much like a complex dynamical system where outputs are determined and affected by inputs. An interesting behavior of such systems occurs when resonance is present, the case when very small inputs that are appropriately timed, eventually produce unexpected and significant energy output over time. Paul indicates that everyone is important in the body of Christ and everyone's role is important in ways we may not understand. We have all experienced some minor physical ailment that can easily disturb our usual routine. Perhaps we need to realize that the same thing happens to the community when someone is anxious and distraught, unable to participate to their capability. We can seek those that may not feel fulfilled and build them up so they become active participants in the community. Our efforts in harmonizing the little things, the seemingly small responsibilities that fall upon us, will eventually resonate into something marvelous for the community. Patience and consistency are vital keys to this happening and when our prayers and deeds, no matter how small, harmonize with the promptings of the Holy Spirit, we can expect the emergence of a vibrant parish community.

