

Third Sunday Ordinary Time - C ' 2022  
Neh. 8.2-10///1 Cor.12.12-30///Luke 1.1-4;4.14-21

→a young man who had been deaf since birth often watched in perplexed amazement as people cavorted and swayed on the dance floor.

→it made no sense to him, until one day, by the miracle of a medical treatment his hearing was repaired...and he heard the music for the very first time....**and then he understood.**

→a young student traveler in a foreign country heard the mindless chatter around her as people spoke in a language she did not know.

→she felt alone, isolated and cut off and thought the residents of that country were not very polite or civilized. Years later she returned, this time fluent in the country's language after years of study and practice.

→that same cold and distant country now felt warm and hospitable...the language was beautiful and lyric because **she now understood.**

→finally, the rookie athlete plods along through endless routines and drills, or the beginning medical student devotes huge amounts of data to memory.

→it all seems so unnecessary on the surface.... useless tasks and information...but much later in the season, and later in residency...they both come to see the value of doing the drills and knowing the facts....the difference....**is because now they understand**

→sometimes we hear things and its meaning remains obscure to us

→sometimes wisdom sounds like gibberish

→and sometimes we just don't know enough, or we haven't lived long enough, or haven't paid enough attention....to realize the context or depth of the profound insights that might be staring us in the face..

→**it's not hearing we lack....but understanding**

→[because you see]....it is **understanding** that allows an antiquities expert to discern the difference between a rare artifact and a forgery

→it is **understanding** that allows a dermatologist to discern the difference between a freckle and a melanoma...

→it is **understanding** that brings a profound awareness to a trained singer...or a glazed over expression to the novice....listening to the same performance

→and it is the same with our **hearing** and **understanding** of scripture.

→in addition to today being the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time...it is also the "Sunday of the Word of God"...a designation created by Pope Francis to raise awareness and appreciation to importance of sacred scripture in our lives and faith...

*PAUSE*

→[you know]....the Bible has often been described as a shallow pool...safe enough to swim into...and yet deep and dangerous enough for to drown in....

→some parts of the Bible can be grasped by children while at the same time scholars can spend an entire lifetime trying to seize its depth and insight.

→and our passages for today point to this reality...in particular our second reading from Paul's letter to the Corinthians and our passage from Luke's gospel account.

→i.o.w....they attempt to move us from **hearing** to **understanding**

*PAUSE*

→in the second reading, Paul writes about what it means to belong to the body of Christ...to be a member of the Church

→that as a member and part of the body....we are called to play our part, take up our responsibility....and realize our duties...so that the whole body, the entire church, may fulfill the mission of the gospel here on earth

.....→then in the gospel...Luke presents us with the inaugural address of Jesus....telling us who Jesus is and what he is about....

→*"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 the captives and recovery of sight to the blind...to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."*

→these words are filled with hope and expectation....

→and today we are being reminded that as members of the Body ....we share in the responsibility of not only **hearing** but **understanding** the message of scripture

→i.o.w. the challenge before us is to make sure the dreams, and hopes.....the expectations that Jesus sets forth in today's gospel and that Paul reminds us of ...happen in our world today.....

→and that can only be....if we not only **hear** the words but **understand** them as well....if we make these words our dreams, our hopes and our expectations

→simply put....more concretely....

-----.....if the victims of poverty are to hear the good news of Jesus Christ...then we have to be the ones to proclaim it...

→if the victims of blindness, disease, and other misfortunes are to recover their vision and hope...then we must be the ones to give it to them

→if the victims of oppression and those in prisons (whatever form that might be) are to be set free....then we must be the ones raising our voices in their support

→[and] if the darkness of our world is to turn into light...then we have be ones to make it happen.

----- [TOLD this story before but I think it has meaning for us still today]

[there once was] an old man was walking along a beach one day after a big storm

50 yards ahead of him was a young woman...she was picking up starfish that the storm had stranded on the beach and was throwing them back into the sea

→[well] when the old man caught up with her...he asked her what she was doing...she replied that the starfish would die unless they were returned to the sea before the sun began beating down on them.....

---the old man said...but the beach goes on for miles and miles...and there are thousands of stranded starfish...how can your small effort make a difference?

---[and then] picking up a starfish and holding it in her hands../she said...it makes a big difference to this one and with that she returned it to the sea

→the spirit of that young woman, I believe ///// **is the message** of today's gospel passage...and it is the kind of spirit that every one of us should strive to imitate

→how can our efforts....our works...our acts of kindness make a difference....

→well it makes a big difference to the ones who receive our help, to the ones who receive our kindness, to the ones who receive our glad tidings...

PAUSE

→Jesus, in his inaugural address as our Lord and Savior that we hear today set the course of our world....

→[and] St. Paul reminds us of our responsibility to keep this course alive...to keep the mission of Jesus a real part of who we are.....

---...has it been successful...will it remain successful?.....

well in the end....that depends....on how committed you and I remain in our responsibility to not just **hear**...but **understand** our mission and challenge to carry forth the message of Jesus Christ.