

### Epiphany 3 (3 Ordinary Sunday) Year C

**Readings:** *Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, I Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21, Psalm 19*

**Theme:** *Varieties of Gifts*

"For in the one spirit we were all baptised into one body Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and we were all made to drink one cup."

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

My dear friends on this third Sunday of Epiphany, we meditate on the varieties of gift with bring as member of the body of Christ. What help do we get from the readings we have heard this morning?

In the first reading from the book of Nehemiah, we hear how Ezra was consoling his people after the return from exile. It was a very difficult time and was not an easy to convince the people that God had not abandoned them. As a source of consolation and a reminder to the people, he read from the book to all. The people found it difficult to take but he encourages them to rejoice at the Law for in it the promises of God are alive.

In the second reading, Paul writing to the Corinthian Christians tells them about the uniqueness of the community to which they belong. He compares the community to a body with different parts. No part is independent. Each dovetails into the other. He talks of the composition of the body of Christ which is the Church. He mentions the various talents that each member of the church brings and reminds them that they all make up one body. The different gifts we have are a part of the divine plan. In short, just as the human body made up of many parts, so the church though composed of different gifts form a unity. Concluding his letter he writes: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are miracle workers? Do all possess the gift of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?"

With this he designates the various roles we have to play in the church of God.

In the Gospel we hear Jesus preaching the word of God, In the Synagogue, Jesus adopts words from the prophet Isaiah. His mention of the spirit reminds people of Jesus' baptism. His programme of preaching the Good News to the poor prepares people for the ministry of Jesus and his disciples who will continue his work after he is gone. The poor in the Gospel are those in genuine

need whether it is lack of material resources or in physical distress. He challenged his hearers to recognise their today and accept or reject him.

Today we are called to answer to the call of Jesus. Of course those of us here this morning have answered that call. He calls on you and me to recognise their today and stop living a lie. In his assembly we are to come to him the way we are. He made it and it is he who has given us this talents. That is why where ever they find themselves, Christians should give thanks to God for the gifts they have and use these gifts in the assembly to build his kingdom.

We are not all going to be preachers, we are not all going to be miracle workers, each and every one of us has received so we must learn to give. The obligation to preach the Gospel to the poor which is a common theme in the teaching of Jesus is an obligation on us as his followers. We are to preach the Gospel to the poor.

We all are in ministry in one way or another: towards one another in our families, in the wider community. The work we do can equally be seen as a ministry, a service. Our attitude to it says a lot as to who we are. Ministry may mean giving things but the most important more often it is about giving ourselves. We must be ready for frustration, misunderstanding, failure and powerlessness. We should not be deterred.

We belong to a church whose mission is to bring the gospel message to the poor and freedom to the oppressed in a very real sense we all stand under the judgement of God's word which demands a response in here and now. While we must rejoice in our gifts and achievements, we must not forget the weaker members of our society. We are all called by God and our mission is to be the power of good by living as Christ did and bringing good news to all we meet and come in contact with.

On this Sunday my dear friends, let us examine our roles in bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth. Have we used the gifts to build the kingdom? Let us now reflect on these.

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