

Sunday January 23, 2022
Third Sunday of Ordinary Time
Parishioner Reflection

By: Gerald Mackrell

No sooner had the rebuild of walls of the great city of Jerusalem been completed when the Jews in captivity flocked to the city seeking freedom and protection from their captors. Building homes and creating small towns within its walls provided security from slavery and tyranny, the only life which many of them had known since birth.

The numbers of people had grown so much within the walled city that a special platform had to be built that the priest Ezra might be seen and heard by the crowd. Ezra brought the Book of the Law before the assembly, in the presence of the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of Law. The Levites interpreted the readings. They gave the sense, (Speaking in the vernacular, in the language of their times) so that the people understood the readings. All the people wept when they heard and understood the words of the Law.

Is it any wonder that they wept with joy as the words of the Law were read and explained to them? As Jews they had been held in captivity for so long and forbidden to practice their faith. Within the walls of the great city, they could live in relative safety practicing openly the faith of their fathers.

The books of the Old Testament provided a detailed account of man's life with God to the coming of Jesus. Luke, for the benefit of Theophilus and posterity decided to write an orderly account of the life and times of Jesus. He set out to garner information from every avenue possible. The apostles being a major source, writings from those who had even the most remote contact with Jesus, and most of all, conversations with those who followed, listened, and observed. Luke was meticulous in his quest. Referencing, verifying, seeking only truth, that which would stand the test of time and scrutiny. This undertaking by Luke was monumental, it can only have been inspired by The Holy Spirit, a directive from God Himself.

The Sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus was the year of the Lord as proclaimed by Isaiah. Anointed to reveal, opening of the eyes of the blind, proclaim release of the captives, throwing the gates of Heaven open to the redeemed.

St. Paul's writings about 'One body many members,' beautifully illustrate the fact that we are part of something greater than ourselves, each one of us have a vital role to play, and we cannot overstate the importance of this role. The ripple effect of our words and actions will impact the

attitudes of those around us. As members of the body of Christ we bear a tremendous responsibility to our neighbours. John writes in 14: 20 'On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you.' To be part of the Godhead, must be the goal of all who seek eternity.

Today's readings illustrate the depths to which God will go to intervene on our behalf. There are many different children, from many different countries, languages, and concepts of God. I believe that the only way to enter into communion with God is through His Son Jesus. However, repentant sinners of every stripe who have a genuine love of God can enter eternal life. There are two stipulations in the form of commandments. First is you must love The Lord your God with your whole soul, mind, and heart, and secondly, you must love your neighbour as yourself.

We must observe these two commandments. Observing one without the other will not fulfil this obligation. If you will not love your neighbour as yourself, you cannot be loving God. Mathew 7:21 says, "not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter heaven." I suspect God is saying to us that we can call out Lord Lord, God is great, Jesus is Lord, praise the Lord etc. etc., as often as we may, but without acting as God commanded, our platitudes are falling on deaf ears.

As part of The Body, we must consider the whole.