

## WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

**Readings:** Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10  
Psalm 19:8-10, 15  
1 Cor 12:12-30  
Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
January 24, 2010

**Word:** God's love is glorified in the sonship of Jesus.

**Theme:** The sonship of Jesus is manifested upon those who bring glad tidings to the poor. [Charity]

**Promise:** *"Do not be saddened this day, for rejoicing in the Lord must be your strength."* (Neh 8:10)

### Reflection:

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, 1 Cor 12:12-30, St. Paul explains to the people of Corinth that, like the human body, the Body of Christ has many parts, but is still one body. The statement serves as a prelude to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist this Sunday, which honors our glorified Lord Jesus.

During the Gospel reading, Jesus proclaims the year of the Lord's favor, as written in the Scripture, which he tells his listeners, ***"is being fulfilled in your hearing,"*** [Lk 4:19, 21]. What exactly did Jesus mean when he says the year of the Lord's favor is being fulfilled "in your hearing"? He was referring to the long-awaited messianic jubilee which had finally arrived, and that the promised messianic salvation is now in our midst. Jesus affirms that He is the long-awaited Messiah promised by the Father to His people throughout the days of the Old Testament.

Two thousand years ago, on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem [Acts 1:4, 2:2]. Jesus established his 'visible' church on earth, to which we belong. At the same time, He established the invisible counterpart, the Kingdom of God in Heaven. Both the visible Holy Catholic Church and the invisible Kingdom of God compose the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Holy Catholic Church, visible in nature, is part of the Body of Christ because it is composed of members who share in the life of the Risen Christ. The invisible Kingdom of God is also part of the Body of Christ because it is composed of all the saints who have persevered in living their faith in Christ, and have therefore received their just eternal reward and salvation. The visible is our first step; the invisible is our final step. The visible is our journey towards and hope of attaining the invisible; the invisible is our goal, our destination of eternal joy and peace in the continuous Divine presence of our Lord God and all His heavenly creations.

In His proclamation, Jesus says that He has been anointed to bring good news to the poor, to release the captives, bring recovery of sight to the blind and set free the oppressed. Literally taken in a worldly sense, the words imply that Jesus came to bring abundance to the poor, free the slaves and prisoners, heal the blind and put a stop all worldly oppression. But this was not what Jesus is saying.

Seen from a spiritual viewpoint, it becomes clear that the Lord Jesus was proclaiming the arrival of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Kingdom of God is the good news that Jesus was announcing. For the coming of the Kingdom meant the arrival of the promised Messiah. It meant that those who were spiritually blind would be enlightened, be capable now of seeing the way, the truth and the life. It means that those who were captives of sin, slaves of Satan would be set free, first through the Sacrament of Baptism and then through the Sacrament of Confession, that upon death, they may instantly enjoy eternal life.

It means that those who were spiritually poor now have a living hope in Christ. We, Gentiles, who were born before the coming of Christ would all have been spiritually poor with no hope of the eternal glory that comes with salvation because we are not part of God's chosen people, the Jewish nation. By our new birth in Christ through baptism, we are no longer poor but spiritually rich. Acts 2:28 teaches us how to live life through Jesus Christ.

As Christians, we join the ranks of God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, commanded to clothe ourselves with humility. In Colossians 3:12 ***"Whoever humbles himself like a child is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven."*** Matthew 18:4 we are exhorted to humble ourselves - ***"He who humbles himself before the Lord, the Lord shall exalt him."*** And in James 4:10, we are told ***"...for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."***

As Christians, we are also to observe God's Commandments. Today's First Reading from the Book of Nehemiah tells us how much importance was placed in those days on knowing and obeying the Law of Moses. In the days of Nehemiah, anyone who reaches the age of reason and could hear with understanding was required to be present and to listen to the reading of the law. I can assure you that there was more than one law. It took from early morning until midday to listen while they were being read. That would be equivalent to listening to a three or four hour sermon.

Jesus must have known that some of us Gentiles can be very impatient when it comes to long sermons. So, He summarized the Ten Commandments and the Law of Moses into two simple commandments for us. ***"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first Commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two Commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*** [Mt. 22:37-40].

Today's Second Reading tells us how important it is for members of the Body of Christ to be united. Each of us has been called to serve the Lord Jesus. While one might serve as a priest, another in the choir as a musician or singer. Some are called to be Deacons, others as Extra-Ordinary Eucharistic Ministers. Still others may serve as Altar Servers, as Gift Bearers, as Lectors, as Ministers of Hospitality, as Secretary, as Knights of Columbus, etc... And let us not forget those who have the spiritual gifts of healing, speaking in tongues, of interpretation, of leadership, etc. With each calling come spiritual gifts to equip us for the benefit of the Body.

All this tells us is that, while there are many members but only one Body in Christ, all its members are indispensable. If someone neglects his functions as a member, the rest suffer. Why? Because there is something missing; it is like trying to point the direction to someone with a missing index finger. No finger, no pointing!

Now some may not like the previous statements and say, 'I quit!' Sorry, but you cannot quit the Body of Christ. When you received the Sacrament of Baptism, you were reborn in water and the Spirit [Jn. 3:5]. You are a new creation, a godly seed [1 Jn. 3:9] in fulfillment of the Father's promise in the Old Testament. During your admission to the Body of Christ as a

new creation, you received as “first installment,” [Eph. 1:13-4; 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5] the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit for your sanctification.

So you see, when you have a fallen-away Catholic who has abandoned his living faith in Christ, he is still a Catholic. He still belongs to the Body of Christ. And the Body of Christ shall suffer as long as the faithful members of the Church do not commit themselves to evangelizing their parish to ensure that all the members of the Body are active participants of their local Church. That is what St. Paul was teaching to the Corinthians.

The Body of Christ cannot be divided. No one can say ‘there are Catholics and then there are Catholics,’ for there is one Christ, one Spirit, one faith, one Baptism and one Body. When a small part of the Body of Christ isolates itself from the rest, there is disharmony that can lead to division. Such action is not of the Spirit of Christ.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, with a sincere heart, let us reflect upon our commitment to the Body of Christ.

**Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:**

1. Am I actively involved in my parish?
2. Am I making an effort to draw to my parish those whom I know to have been shipwrecked in their faith? Or, am I the cause of division within the Body of Christ?

**Next Week’s Daily Mass Reading Guide:**

January 25, 2010 (Mon):	Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22; Ps 117:1, 2; Mk 16:15-18
January 26, 2010 (Tue):	2 Tim 1:1-8 or Tim 1:1-5; Ps 96:1-3, 7-8; Mk 3:31-35 or Lk 10:1-9
January 27, 2010 (Wed):	2 Sm 7:4-17; Ps 89:4-5, 27-30; Mk 4:1-20
January 28, 2010 (Thur):	2 Sm 7:18-19, 24-29; PS 132:1-5, 11-14; Mk 4:21-25
January 29, 2010 (Fri):	2 Sm 11:1-10, 13-17; Ps 51:3-7, 10-11; Mk 4:26-34
January 30, 2010 (Sat):	2 Sm 12:1-7, 10-17; Ps 51:12-17; Mk 4:35-41

***“Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!”***