

Third Sunday Ordinary Time - C ' 2019
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 inane chatter of nonsensical syllables 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 beautiful and lyric because **she now understood.**

→the rookie athlete plods 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 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 enough, or we are not paying 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 an appreciative tear to the eye of a trained singer...and a glazed over expression to the novice....listening to the same performance

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

PAUSE

→the Bible has been likened to a pool shallow and safe enough to swim in...and 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 depths and insights.

→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....as 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

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

→it is filled with exciting and hopeful phrases

→"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....hope for the poor, for the helpless and for the oppressed...

→and today we are being reminded that as members of the Bodyyou and I share in the responsibility of not only **hearing** but **understanding** the dreams of the gospel message so that they might come true

PAUSE

→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 among people 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

→[and] that is what our Christian calling as baptized members of the Church...as members of the Body....as children of God is all about

→ simply put....more concretely....

-----.....if the victims of poverty are to hear the good news of Jesus Christ...then we are the ones that must tell it to them

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

→if the victims of political oppression and those in prisons throughout the world are to be set free....then we must be the ones to raise our voices in their support

→[and] if the darkness of our world is to turn into light...then we must 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 small effort make a difference in a world filled with millions of people who need help?

→how can our small works, our small acts of kindness make a difference in a world filled with millions who need it....

→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...to those who recover their sight...and to those who are set free because of you and me.

PAUSE

→Jesus, in his inaugural address as our Lord and Savior that we hear about today set the course of our world....and he did that close to 2000 years ago.

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

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

well in the end....that depends,

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