



# Daily Reflections

## January 7, 2021

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### Scripture

#### **Luke 4:14-22**

And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit, into Galilee, and the fame of him went out through the whole country.

And he taught in their synagogues, and was magnified by all.

And he came to Nazareth, where he was brought up: and he went into the synagogue, according to his custom, on the sabbath day; and he rose up to read.

And the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered unto him. And as he unfolded the book, he found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart,

To preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward.

And when he had folded the book, he restored it to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

And he began to say to them: This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears.

And all gave testimony to him: and they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from his mouth, and they said: Is not this the son of Joseph?

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### Our Scripture Reflection

Today's Gospel has been called by scholars, "The Mission Statement of Jesus", and truly it is. He goes to the hometown synagogue as was His custom and preaches from a scroll of the Prophet Isaiah. He makes the words of Isaiah His own description of what He will do while on earth, and He does in time. But, as we shall see, while in awe initially at His powerful words, the

crowds will have second thoughts. We, the readers of this beautiful text will witness a significant part of His mission that He will not talk about during His preaching....rejection!

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## **Food for your Journey**

In our work, we are taking the bits and pieces of people's shattered lives and opening ourselves up to God's work of creating caring, discerning communities — just as happened after a hurricane hit a small town in South Louisiana.

Walking around the area surveying the damage, it pained the pastor to see the houses torn apart and contents spilled on the ground in broken and tangled heaps. As he walked among the tree limbs, he saw in the dirt an image of a smiling face. Bending over to pick it up, he realized it was a wedding photo that the storm had ripped and discarded in the street. Someone, somewhere, was missing the photo. He wondered who it could be.

So, he decided to open the basement of his church and allow the community to have a photo lost and found. He set up long tables and invited the whole town to bring in any pictures they had picked up out of the storm debris. People came with the bits of anonymous family histories: proud men standing in front of cherry-red Chevrolets, women posing in their Sunday best in front of bursting azalea bushes, anxious couples going to their high school dance, and small children playing on the park swings. Along with the crumpled bits of pictures, people began to pour into the fellowship hall, recognizing parts of their own lives and those of their neighbors. Years after the fact, people still talk about the church that opened its doors to all the torn bits of people's lives. When I heard about it, I wondered what would happen if all our churches began to reach out to our communities, inviting people in so they might have some spiritual grounding in our cultural storm. Imagine: church as a space where men, women and children can gather with the bits of their broken lives and seek wholeness with their stories, their histories and their neighbors.

—Carol Howard Merritt, *Reframing Hope: Vital Ministry in a New Generation*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2010, Kindle Loc. 2123-36.

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## **A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, Please give me the Grace I need to have my heart completely converted to Your way of thinking and living. Help me, Lord, to use my time as Your disciple to assist the needs of those who are in need. Through my efforts may I bring them joy and peace. Amen