

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last Sunday, St. John related Jesus' first public miracle at Cana. In today's Gospel, Luke presents another revelation in his hometown in Nazareth: when called upon to read and comment on the Torah reading, Jesus conveys his mission as Messiah, the arrival of the Kingdom of God on earth. Our readings this weekend thus invite us to listen closely to the Word, carry it into our hearts, and be Christ's ambassadors in our world. This is probably a day to reflect more, talk less and preach with our actions.

In our First Reading, which follows on the heels of the rebuilding of the second temple, an early Old Testament priest, Ezra, assembles great numbers of the Israelites who had lost their connection to the faith.

Let us thoughtfully consider how Ezra movingly restores the faith of the Israelites by creating a "covenant renewal" ceremony. In the Second Reading, St. Paul reminds the Corinthians and us today; "Together we are Christ's Body, but each of us is a different part of it." This suggests how important it is that as members of the Body of Christ, we each have a share in bringing the saving mission of Christ to our world. None of us are insignificant since Christ needs every part and every person, to fulfill his mission .

In the Gospel, as if an echo from Ezra, St. Luke describes how on a Sabbath, Jesus stands before the people in the synagogue and proclaims the words of Isaiah who had prophesized about the Messiah and his mission. Instead of commenting on the prophet, Jesus declares his fulfillment; that he is the One sent *to bring glad tidings to the poor, liberation to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed.*

Reflecting on how Our Holy Father Pope Francis declared a "Year of Mercy" three years ago, he spoke how "it is the favorable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and to touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone the way of forgiveness and reconciliation." It only seems fitting to accept God's mercy in order to share it with others. I have in the past referred to a familiar Latin phrase: "nemo dat quod non habet" (you cannot give what you don't have).

Sin truly blinds us and so we need the miracle of true liberation from Christ; driving out our hidden and evil habits, vain pride, addictions, and attachments to the world, in order to share it with those we encounter in our daily lives — families, neighborhoods and parishioners. We need to implore the Holy Spirit to work through us, pleading to experience true conversion. As we study the scriptures, may our hearts burn with the same zeal that inspired Jesus so that we may be challenged to a "fresh beginning," especially each time we participate in the Holy Eucharist. Amen.

Have a Blessed Sunday!