

Luke 1:1-4 4:14-21

1 Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, **2** exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, **3** I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, **4** so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.

14 Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee, and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. **15** He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him. **16** He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, **17** and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written: **18** 'The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, **19** to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.' **20** He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. **21** Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.'

Other readings: Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10 Psalm 18 (19) 1 Corinthians 12:12-30

This Sunday we finally begin our reading of the Gospel of Luke, the gospel laid down to be read in Year C. There are two separate passages in today's gospel reading. We begin with the opening four verses of chapter 1, in which the evangelist sets down his method of working and his intention. Luke tells us that others evangelists have already written gospels. His sources are eye-witnesses of Jesus, and those who have preached the gospel. Luke's assures Theophilus, to whom the gospel is addressed, and all who hear or read it, that the gospel is trustworthy.

Luke begins the story of Jesus' ministry with his visit to the synagogue in Nazareth. Jesus reads from the book of Isaiah at the sabbath service, and declares that the text he reads is being fulfilled. Luke wants us to recognize that Jesus is the long-awaited anointed one of God (the Messiah, the Christ). He brings 'good news to the poor', not those who have little in a worldly sense, but those who recognise their poverty in the sight of God, their need of God. Luke is already answering the question 'Who is Jesus?' The Nazareth story will continue next week.

What can we deduce from this gospel about how the gospels came to be written?

What do you understand by the word 'fulfilment'?

Let us pray that our hearts will be open to new insights as we begin reading Luke.

Let us pray that we ourselves may be 'good news to the poor'.