

Sunday Readings Reflections of 1/24/2016

Reading 1 Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10

Today's reading presents an interesting picture of the priest Ezra standing above the people to deliver his interpretation of the law of God. His reading goes on for hours and saddens the people as they consider how much they need to reform their lives. Perhaps their weeping finally convinces Ezra to "take it easy on them." He and Nehemiah, the governor of Judah, then encourage the people to celebrate their observance of the law. The people, they say, should have a great feast because "rejoicing in the Lord" will be their source of strength.

Reading 2 1 Corinthians 12:12-30 or 12:12-14, 27

Human beings have a desire to belong—to another person, to a community, or to God. We can imagine how the Christians at Corinth welcomed Paul's letter assuring them that they were all "one body." They were not to create divisions among themselves by identifying as Jews or Greeks, slaves or free people, women or men. Because they had all been anointed by the Holy Spirit, they had become together the one body of Christ. Each was a member; no one was left out.

Gospel Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Just as Ezra, in our first reading, read to the people from Scripture, Jesus reads from the book of the prophet Isaiah about the Servant of the Lord. He announces that he is the fulfillment of Scripture. Then he tells the crowd in the synagogue that he is the one sent by God. His presence is their guarantee that a "year of favor," or time of salvation, has begun. All eyes are glued on him as he puts down the scroll and takes his seat.