

# **Luke 4:14-44**

## **Jesus, the Father's Missionary**



**Begin each reflection in prayer:** Suggested prayer:

*Loving God, you called us each by name and gave your only Son to redeem us. Open our hearts to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.*

*Send us the Holy Spirit to continue the mission of Jesus among us.*

*Give us the courage to speak his name to those who are close to us. And grant us the generosity to share his love with those who most need it.*

*Help us to be missionaries in his name.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

### **Luke 4:14-22. The Mission of Jesus.**

**14**Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit and news of him spread throughout the whole Region. **15**He taught in their synagogue and was praised by all. **16**He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read **17**and was handed the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

**18**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he has anointed me to bring good news 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. **19** and to proclaim a year of favor to the Lord.

**20**He rolled up the scroll and handed back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently upon him. **21**He said to them, "Today this scripture passage has been fulfilled in your hearing." **22**And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the words that came from his mouth.

**Day 1.** (Read Lk Chapter 4: 14-15)

1. Take a moment. Read the passage of the day. Breathe in deeply. Imagine or think about Jesus' baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit. How do you experience the power of the Holy Spirit? When, where, how or with whom?

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## ARMED FOR MISSION.

Luke presents a Jesus who came from the temptations in the desert armed by the Spirit and ready to begin the mission that is given by His Father. He chooses a passage from the Prophet Isaiah. Jesus identifies completely from this passage and its prophecy. This is his mission and the mission defines Jesus.



The above passage is central to Luke's portrayal of Jesus. Through the eyes of Luke it emphatically presents what Jesus considers to be his mission. His Church will be formed & transformed to embrace the same mission for every generation. *The boldly highlighted words in the passage will be given particular attention. They give us the reasons for Jesus being sent to us and for the existence of the Church.*



### **Galilee:**

Jesus' ministry begins in Galilee:

From Galilee Jesus makes his journey to the city of his destiny, **Jerusalem.**

### **Day 2.** (Read Lk: 4: 16-19)

1 How do you think Jesus felt when he was invited to read the scripture in the synagogue of his hometown?

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2. What strikes you about the passage that he read?

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### **Power of the Spirit:**

Luke emphatically stresses that Jesus has left the desert temptations armed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

This spirit that guides Jesus with "power" guides the Church. There is continuity between the time of Jesus and the time of his Church.

### **Power: Greek: "dynamis"**

**IN ENGLISH WE DERIVE SUCH WORDS AS DYNAMO AND DYNAMITE. IT DENOTES A VIBRANT ENERGY OR FORCE. THE POWER THAT JESUS POSSESSES IS THE DYNAMIC PRESENCE, WHICH IS THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

**Synagogue: Greek: "synagoge"**

**IT IS LIKE OUR WORD, CHURCH.**

**IT CAN MEAN A CONGREGATION OF BELIEVERS AND/ OR A BUILDING.**

**IT IS DIFFERENT FROM THE TEMPLE. THERE WAS ONE TEMPLE**

**IT WAS IN JERUSALEM.**

**SYNAGOGUE IS FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.**

Jesus returned to his hometown, Nazareth to attend the prayer service of his Jewish people.

**THE MISSION.**

**Day 3:** (Read Lk 4: 17-21)

1. What does this passage say to you about Jesus' mission?

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2. What is like to be poor? What are some of the most difficult things about being poor?

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3. Is there an upside to being poor? If so, what would it be?

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**Scroll of the Prophet Isaiah:**

Jesus selects a passage from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

(Read Isaiah 61:1-3). Isaiah was one of the great prophets sent by God to challenge and console God's people who were held in exile.

The passage that Jesus chooses is filled with great hope. It prophesied the coming of the Messiah who would ransom and free God's people.



***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me."***

- **Baptism:** When Jesus was baptized he is revealed as the Messiah, "God's Anointed One." He is filled with the Holy Spirit and armed for the mission. The Father has consecrated Jesus. Jesus will fulfill his Father's will in every step he takes, in every word he proclaims and in every action he does.

- **Jesus** is the spirit filled Savior who will baptize his disciples with the same spirit (Pentecost).

**“To bring glad tidings (good news to the poor).”**

- **Glad tidings** (gospel). Jesus will become the good news that his followers will pattern their lives upon.

- **The poor.** Jesus’ mission is directed to the poor and it will flow from the poor to others.

- Jesus’ first followers are chosen from among the poor (Luke 5).

- Jesus’ first healing are with the poor. From the poor they will reach the attention of the Jewish religious leaders and the ears of the gentiles.

- Jesus’ first formalized teaching will center on the poor. (Luke 6).



**“He has sent me.” “Apostellos”** Greek: **“to send or be sent”**.  
We derive the word apostle.

**“Missio”** Latin: we derive the words mission and missionary.

Luke will make the direct connection that Jesus, the missionary of the Father, will choose, prepare and send his missionaries.

### **JESUS IS THE MISSIONARY OF THE FATHER.**

Jesus is the beloved Son, the anointed one, the one sent by the Father.

**“Proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.”**

#### **1. Captive, blind and oppressed.**

These are all the concrete conditions of the poverty in Jesus’ time  
They continue to be consequences of poverty in our times.

#### **2. Spiritual Blindness and captivity:**

They also apply to the deep spiritual blindness and captivity that Jesus came to heal and free all from sin by his forgiveness.

**3. Kingdom of God:** These actions are specific indicators that the Kingdom has begun. *“The blind shall see, the lame will walk...”*

**“Proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”**

The prophet Isaiah described a period of time when Israel would be delivered from captivity. It would be a time of great joy and salvation. Luke uses the passage from Isaiah to proclaim a new period of Jesus and the salvation that comes through him.

The proclamation of a holy year was rich in Israel's tradition. It would be a special year proclaimed by a King to celebrate great blessings.

Pope John Paul II announced a Holy Year for 2000. Four years of preparation led up to the new millennium. Pope John Paul asked the church to prepare for a new evangelization to usher in these years.

***“Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”***

The Kingdom of God begins with Jesus. He fulfills God's promises to his people. Jesus is the center of history. Those who hear Jesus must make a choice to accept or reject him. Luke fills his gospel with people who have heard Jesus. Some will accept him whole-heartedly. Others will reject and seek to destroy him. For Luke, personal testimony of a life dedicated to Jesus and his mission is at the heart of the message.

### **Jesus is rejected by his hometown.**

**4:22** All <sup>78</sup> were speaking well of him, and were amazed at the gracious words coming out of his mouth. They <sup>79</sup> said, “Isn't this <sup>80</sup> Joseph's son?” **4:23** Jesus <sup>81</sup> said to them, “No doubt you will quote to me the proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ <sup>82</sup> and say, ‘What we have heard that you did in Capernaum, <sup>83</sup> do here in your hometown too.’” **4:24** And he added, <sup>84</sup> “I tell you the truth, <sup>85</sup> no prophet is acceptable <sup>86</sup> in his hometown. **4:25** But in truth I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's days, <sup>87</sup> when the sky <sup>88</sup> was shut up three and a half years, and <sup>89</sup> there was a great famine over all the land. **4:26** Yet <sup>90</sup> Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to a woman who was a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. <sup>91</sup> **4:27** And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, <sup>92</sup> yet <sup>93</sup> none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” <sup>94</sup> **4:28** When they heard this, all the people <sup>95</sup> in the synagogue were filled with rage. **4:29** They got up, forced <sup>96</sup> him out of the town, <sup>97</sup> and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that <sup>98</sup> they could throw him down the cliff. <sup>99</sup> **4:30** But he passed through the crowd <sup>100</sup> and went on his way. <sup>101</sup>

**Day 4:** (Read Lk 4: 22-30)

1. How was Jesus received after speaking in his hometown?

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2. Why did so many in Nazareth have a difficult time accepting a Jesus as the Messiah?

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3. Why do you think so many have a difficult time accepting of following Jesus now?

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The initial reaction of the hearers in the synagogue was favorable. But as Jesus continued they began to doubt what they heard and saw. How could this simple man, the son of a carpenter be the Anointed One of God.

Jesus challenged them with two proverbs to expose their lack of faith and the history of rejection by the Jewish nation.

- *“Physician, heal thyself.”*
- *“No prophet is accepted in his hometown.”*

These proverbs were Jesus’ way of responding to the demand for signs from his people. His ministry was to the world, even to the pagans. It could not be confined to his own people or his own nation. The townspeople became so angry that they tried kill him.

### **The power of Jesus’ word.**

**4:31** So <sup>102</sup> he went down to Capernaum, <sup>103</sup> a town <sup>104</sup> in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he began to teach the people. <sup>105</sup> **4:32** They <sup>106</sup> were amazed <sup>107</sup> at his teaching, because he spoke <sup>108</sup> with authority. <sup>109</sup> **4:33** Now <sup>110</sup> in the synagogue <sup>111</sup> there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean <sup>112</sup> demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, **4:34** “Ha! Leave us alone, <sup>113</sup> Jesus the Nazarene! Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One <sup>114</sup> of God.” **4:35** But <sup>115</sup> Jesus rebuked him: <sup>116</sup> “Silence! Come out of him!” <sup>117</sup> Then, after the demon threw the man <sup>118</sup> down in their midst, he came out of him without hurting him. <sup>119</sup> **4:36** They <sup>120</sup> were all amazed and began to say <sup>121</sup> to one another, “What’s happening here? <sup>122</sup> For with authority and power <sup>123</sup> he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” **4:37** So <sup>124</sup> the news <sup>125</sup> about him spread into all areas of the region. <sup>126</sup>

**4:38** After Jesus left <sup>127</sup> the synagogue, he entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus <sup>128</sup> to help her. <sup>129</sup> **4:39** So <sup>130</sup> he stood over her, commanded <sup>131</sup> the fever, and it left her. Immediately <sup>132</sup> she got up and began to serve <sup>133</sup> them.

**4:40** As the sun was setting, all those who had any relatives <sup>134</sup> sick with various diseases brought them to Jesus. <sup>135</sup> He placed <sup>136</sup> his hands on every one of them and healed them. **4:41** Demons also came out <sup>137</sup> of many, crying out, <sup>138</sup> “You are the Son of God!” <sup>139</sup> But he rebuked <sup>140</sup> them, and would not allow them to speak, <sup>141</sup> because they knew that he was the Christ. <sup>142</sup>

**4:42** The next morning <sup>143</sup> Jesus <sup>144</sup> departed and went to a deserted place. Yet <sup>145</sup> the crowds were seeking him, and they came to him and tried to keep him from leaving them. **4:43** But Jesus <sup>146</sup> said to them, “I must <sup>147</sup> proclaim the good news of the kingdom <sup>148</sup> of God to the other towns <sup>149</sup> too, for that is what I was sent <sup>150</sup> to do.” <sup>151</sup> **4:44** So <sup>152</sup> he continued to preach in the synagogues of Judea. <sup>153</sup>

**Day 5:** (Read Lk 4: 31-44)

1. What strikes you most about the story of the possessed man? Why?

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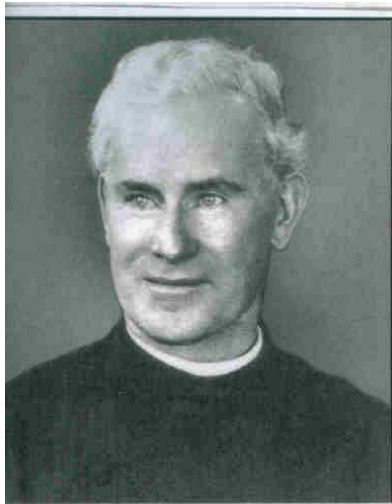
2. What strikes you about the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law?

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After his rejection in Nazareth, Jesus returned to Capernaum. Capernaum was Jesus' mission base where he found and formed his first followers. From there Jesus would travel around Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and the countryside.

From his base in Capernaum Jesus shows his power over demons and physical diseases. They are signs that the Kingdom of God has arrived. The Galileans were amazed by Jesus' power. They had seen other traveling wonderworkers cast out demons. It was rare but not a unique talent. However, most exorcists required a long process of arguing with the demon. Likewise, it required a fee. By contrast Jesus cast out the demon by a simple command



**FATHER THOMAS JUDGE: The Poor**

Fr. Judge has dedicated his missionary family, by preference, to accompany and serve the poor.

He was a Vincentian priest who was led by the Spirit to respond to the urgent needs of the poor in the USA, especially in the urban Northeast, the rural South and the commonwealth of Puerto Rico. He learned from his experiences the power of working men and women to reach the poor and all those who hunger for God.

In the Vincentian tradition Fr. Judge preached in many parishes to the faithful. It was called the 'Mission Band'.

On his free time he would visit the apartments and neighborhoods around the church. There in the Northeast he found catholic immigrants, mostly poor, who had no relationship to the Church because the Church had no relationship to them. The pastors were content or had plenty to do with attending to the Sunday Catholics.

In trying to visit the neighborhoods Fr. Judge quickly discovered he wasn't well received by the population, nor was he the best suited to reach this large population, which was leaking away from the Church. Father Judge then invited, trained and formed and formed groups of laity to visit and accompany immigrant and the Catholic population in general. These groups, called Cenacles, were the ones who reached those who felt unwelcome or had drifted away.

**(Fr. Guy Wilson, S.T.)**