



St Marylebone
Parish Church

Embertide, Friday 24th June 2020

Isaiah 6.1-8 & Luke 4.16-21

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the first three chapters of his Gospel, St Luke recounts Jesus' birth and the preaching of John the Baptist, but now in Chapter Four, St. Luke chooses to begin his account of the public ministry of Jesus with the words we have just heard.

And how does St Luke sum up why Jesus has come to do? He does it by quoting the Prophet Isaiah, which we have also heard this morning:

The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me . . . for he has sent me to preach the good news to the poor.

Among all the Evangelists, St. Luke is the one, perhaps above all, who chooses to highlight the Divine Mercy and Compassion of Jesus.

It is St. Luke who gives a privileged place to the poor: those who have been cast out of society and religious fellowship.

St. Luke is the Evangelist who tells the Good News of Jesus through recording Jesus' gentleness and mercy; and the Gospel of St Luke is also the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel of prayer, and joy, and of calling others to join Jesus in fulfilling the mission entrusted to him by God the Father.

We celebrate this Eucharist today in Embertide, one of the times in the Christian Year when we pray especially for vocations to the ordained ministry and, usually - in more usual times, this is the principle time of year when men and women are ordained to be deacons or priests or bishops, vocations which help all the baptised to examine their own baptismal vocation, their own calling, so that they too can join Jesus in his vocation of serving the poor, those who have been cast out of society and fellowship through acts of love, gentleness and compassion.

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon Jesus in the waters of baptism, so that he can preach the good news to the poor. The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon *us* at our baptism and, whether we live out our vocation as ordained or lay ministers, we too are called to live lives filled with faith and hope and love in order that we can preach the Good News of God's love in word and deed to *everyone* we meet: rich and poor, insiders and outsiders, the weak and the strong.

Christ came to bring the Good News, and he did so by *literally* fulfilling the words of Isaiah: healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, setting the downtrodden free; liberating those who were in thrall to sin and death and the powers of darkness which seek to destroy; opening people's eyes to the love and

goodness of his Father and inviting them to overcome humankind's selfish separation from God and from each another.

May we, who listen to these words today, ask to be strengthened and emboldened and equipped by God's Holy Spirit as we seek to live out our calling. Amen.