

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time

### *Time – Talent - Treasures*

The next two Sundays talk of the connection between the priesthood and the laity. Jesus was not considered to be among the ordained clergy of his day. He was an itinerate preacher who operated outside the hierarchy of Judaism.

In the gospel we are not told the reputation that preceded Jesus when he returned to worship in the synagogue, but he proclaims release to captives and sight to the blind. He proclaims a jubilee year where debts were forgiven and foreclosed land returned to the original owners. He concludes with, “today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” By linking Jesus’ ministry to the servant image of Isaiah, Luke was telling the early Christians that Jesus was the messiah: the one sent to free prisoners, to heal the blind, to bring God’s blessings.

The 1<sup>st</sup> reading draws a distinction between clergy and laity. Ezra, the priest explains the law to the people. They wept because they violated it supposedly without even knowing it. Since Vatican II, the image of clergy as servant has been reclaimed. Most parishes have become less clergy centered. Laity now take an active part in ministry and administration.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading reminds us that all gifts are necessary and complement each other. Even the smallest and least observable gifts can inspire and reinforce the faith of one or more of the community. The material background of the gift bearer has no relation to the importance of the gift.