

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the afflicted.”

Many have told me that they stopped watching the news.

Not only here in the US but also in other countries.

Last week renowned Canadian media personality Tara Henley, a veteran Canadian Broadcasting Corporation journalist announced that she quit the company. She said that working for companies like hers meant embracing cognitive dissonance and abandoning journalistic integrity. Instead of objective reporting, staff are pressured

and encouraged to toe the line with a given narrative. News is no longer news.

Unlike the Canadian Broadcasting Company, Jesus had some news to report that does not embrace cognitive dissonance.

The news he reported in the Synagogue two thousand years ago is as relevant today as it was for those who first heard it. Christianity is fundamentally the Good News.

But news that has no bearing or import on one’s own circumstance in life, is of no relevance.

For example, if the mainstream media reports that flooding has subsided in Calcutta; that is indeed good news for the people who live there; but it has no real bearing or relevance for our life here in Bergen County. Or if a cure for cancer is discovered, we may be happy to hear that, but if one does not have cancer, it doesn’t really make much difference in their life. It’s good news for others, but not for one personally.

The news which Jesus brings is relevant for everyone, no matter who they are or where they live. But to receive this news, for this news to really be Good News, one has to be aware of being in a concrete existential situation. Without this awareness, without this consciousness, the news will have no bearing.

Good News will be announced in the Gospel at Mass today.

Jesus, the Gospel says, brings Good News “to the afflicted, liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed”.

Having spoken those words, Jesus will sit down and continue: “This text is being fulfilled today even while you are listening”.

While who is listening?

If he is addressing these words to us, Jesus obviously thinks that we are afflicted, blind, captive and oppressed. But do we think so?

Each one of us can ask ourselves: In which way am I afflicted? How am I blind? Of what am I captive or oppressed?

If we are sincere, we will see that there are many things that afflict us, many things to which we are blind, and in numerous ways are captive and oppressed. Not to recognize such would make the Gospel impotent, irrelevant, or at best a Breaking News for others, but certainly for us.

When we listen to the Gospel today, may each of us receive it for what it is – Good News. Receiving this Good News will change our life, from one situation to another.

The flood waters subside, a cure is found. We will leave here not as we arrived.

Fr. Sean