

## Fulfilled in Your Hearing

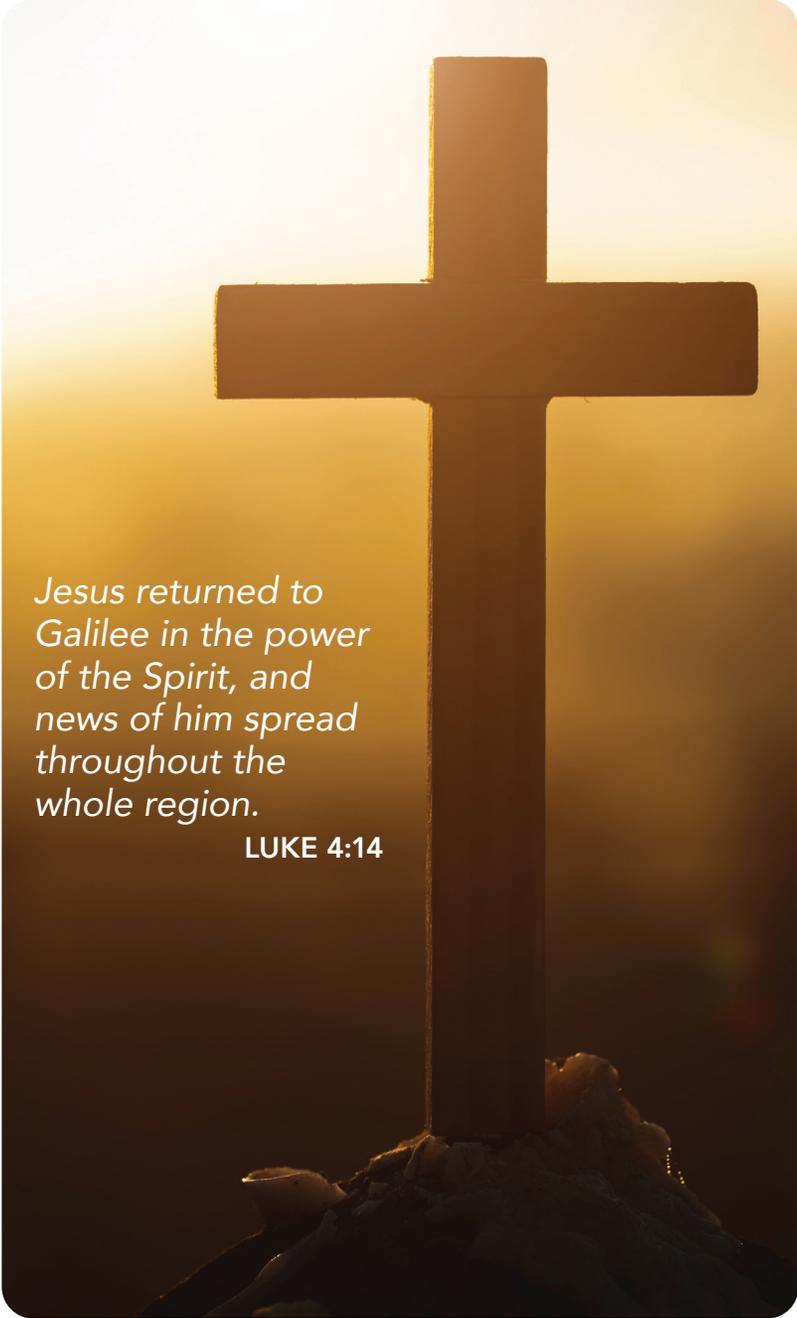
**W**hen we hear that phrase, we might be inclined to think of prophecy.

However, today's readings suggest something a bit different. True, in today's Gospel, Jesus states that he is the fulfillment of the promise made by the prophet Isaiah. However, the way that passage was fulfilled by Jesus was not the way his hearers expected. The passage seems to promise a change in society where there will be no more poor or prisoners. The people expected a political change which would overthrow Roman control. Jesus' application was quite different. The fulfillment of that prophecy included a new and often radical way of understanding society. In other words, Jesus revealed the true meaning of the prophecy.

Such reapplication is even clearer in the first reading. Nehemiah, the Jewish leader of those who had returned from Babylonian exile, gathered all the community together, read the Law, and then reapplied it for them.

Reapplication is often necessary because what might have been a helpful way of understanding something in our faith under some circumstances might be impractical, even inappropriate, in others. For example, to pray for an end to war is important, but to do nothing to work for peace changes how we understand prayer. Circumstances often change as we go through life. Reapplication of our faith acknowledges this and searches for ways that faith can continue to address those changing circumstances. Faithful reapplication always keeps our religious tradition alive and meaningful.

*Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA*



*Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region.*

LUKE 4:14

### FOR Reflection

- ★ *In many ways the Second Vatican Council reapplied our faith. How has your understanding of how to apply our faith changed in your lifetime?*
- ★ *Is there anything that you think still should change? Why do you think this?*

# Dear Padre,

**In your previous column you wrote that the Mass commemorates Jesus' Last Supper and is a thanksgiving for God's gifts to us. Are there other reasons to get out of bed early and attend Sunday Mass?**

**T**he Mass is all about giving thanks for God's forgiveness of sins and this plan for eternal life. In fact, *Eucharist* is derived from the Greek word meaning "gratitude" or "thanksgiving." But there are many other reasons to participate in the Mass.

The Mass is our opportunity to be present with our Lord in the forms of bread and wine. God doesn't usually make frightening appearances to us



accompanied by crashing thunder and lightning. Rather, he makes himself accessible to us in the humble form of food. Jesus said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:54).

As St. Augustine put it, when we receive Christ in

these forms, we become what we receive. We are the body of Christ, not as individuals but as his Church. His Church is his physical presence on earth today, the way people come into contact with Christ.

When we participate in the Mass, we become witnesses to all of this: our liberation from sin and death; our Lord's Real Presence to us in the forms of bread and wine; and we, as Church, becoming what we receive—the body of Christ. Can there be better reasons for waking up on a Sunday morning and attending Mass?

*Fr. Gary Lauenstein, CSsR / Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org*

## Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to [DearPadre.org](http://DearPadre.org) to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



## A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*Without Christ we are condemned to be dominated by everyday weariness, with its worries, and by fear of the future. The Sunday encounter with the Lord gives us the strength to experience the present with confidence and courage, and to go forth with hope. For this reason, we Christians go to encounter the Lord...in the Eucharistic celebration.*

GENERAL AUDIENCE, DECEMBER 13, 2017

## Calendar

### Monday

JANUARY 24

*St. Francis de Sales,  
Bishop and Doctor  
of the Church*

2 Sm 5:1–7, 10

Mk 3:22–30

### Tuesday

JANUARY 25

*The Conversion of  
St. Paul the Apostle*

Acts 22:3–16

or Acts 9:1–22

Mk 16:15–18

### Wednesday

JANUARY 26

*Sts. Timothy and Titus,  
Bishops*

2 Tm 1:1–8 or Ti 1:1–5

Mk 4:1–20

### Thursday

JANUARY 27

Weekday

2 Sm 7:18–19, 24–29

Mk 4:21–25

### Friday

JANUARY 28

*St. Thomas Aquinas,  
Priest and Doctor  
of the Church*

2 Sm 11:1–4a,

5–10a, 13–17

Mk 4:26–34

### Saturday

JANUARY 29

Weekday

2 Sm 12:1–7a, 10–17

Mk 4:35–41

### Sunday

JANUARY 30

*Fourth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time*

Jer 1:4–5, 17–19

1 Cor 12:31–13:13

or 13:4–13

Lk 4:21–30