

BIBLE READINGS 23rd JANUARY

Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-6

¹⁻² On the first day of the seventh month, the people came together in the open area in front of the Water Gate. Then they asked Ezra, who was a teacher of the Law of Moses, to read to them from this Law that the LORD had given his people. Ezra the priest came with the Law and stood before the crowd of men, women, and the children who were old enough to understand. ³ From early morning till noon, he read the Law of Moses to them, and they listened carefully.

⁵ Ezra was up on the high platform, where he could be seen by everyone, and when he opened the book, they all stood up. ⁶ Ezra praised the great LORD God, and the people shouted, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed with their faces to the ground and worshiped the LORD.

This is the Word of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

¹² The body of Christ has many different parts, just as any other body does. ¹³ Some of us are Jews, and others are Gentiles. Some of us are slaves, and others are free. But God's Spirit baptized each of us and made us part of the body of Christ. Now we each drink from that same Spirit.

¹⁴ Our bodies don't have just one part. They have many parts. ¹⁵ Suppose a foot says, "I'm not a hand, and so I'm not part of the body." Wouldn't the foot still belong to the body? ¹⁶ Or suppose an ear says, "I'm not an eye, and so I'm not part of the body." Wouldn't the ear still belong to the body? ¹⁷ If our bodies were only an eye, we couldn't hear a thing. And if they were only an ear, we couldn't smell a thing. ¹⁸ But God has put all parts of our body together in the way that he decided is best.

¹⁹ A body isn't really a body, unless there is more than one part. ²⁰ It takes many parts to make a single body. ²¹ That's why the eyes cannot say they don't need the hands. That's also why the head cannot say it doesn't need the feet. ²² In fact, we cannot get along without the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest. ²³ We take special care to dress up some parts of our bodies. We are modest about our personal parts, ²⁴ but we don't have to be modest about other parts.

God put our bodies together in such a way that even the parts that seem the least important are valuable. ²⁵ He did this to make all parts of the body work together smoothly, with each part caring about the others. ²⁶ If one part of our body hurts, we hurt all over. If one part of our body is honoured, the whole body will be happy.

²⁷ Together you are the body of Christ. Each one of you is part of his body. ²⁸ First, God chose some people to be apostles and prophets and teachers for the church. But he also chose some to work miracles or heal the sick or help others or be leaders or speak different kinds of languages. ²⁹ Not everyone is an apostle. Not everyone is a prophet. Not everyone is a teacher. Not everyone can work miracles. ³⁰ Not everyone can heal the sick. Not everyone can speak different kinds of languages. Not everyone can tell what these languages mean. ³¹ I want you to desire the best gifts.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Luke 4:14-21

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee with the power of the Spirit. News about him spread everywhere. ¹⁵ He taught in the Jewish meeting places, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶ Jesus went back to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as usual he went to the meeting place on the Sabbath. When he stood up to read from the Scriptures, ¹⁷ he was given the book of Isaiah the prophet. He opened it and read,

¹⁸ “The Lord’s Spirit
has come to me,
because he has chosen me
to tell the good news
to the poor.
The Lord has sent me
to announce freedom
for prisoners,
to give sight to the blind,
to free everyone
who suffers,
¹⁹ and to say, ‘This is the year
the Lord has chosen.’”

²⁰ Jesus closed the book, then handed it back to the man in charge and sat down. Everyone in the meeting place looked straight at Jesus.

²¹ Then Jesus said to them, “What you have just heard me read has come true today.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.