

**Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life**

**There is a criticism of the Catholic Church**

**It says that the Catholics are ignorant of Sacred Scripture**

**This is the realm of our Protestant brothers and sisters**

**The Catholic Church is all about the sacraments**

**But this is not true**

**This is not an either / or situation**

**In fact, it falls into a both / and situation**

**If you hear an argument that proposes an either / or scenario**

**One thing you can be fairly certain of**

**It is not a Catholic argument**

**Yes, we have sacraments**

**But we also have Sacred Scripture**

**In fact, our most common sacrament**

**The sacrifice of the Mass is chock full of Scripture**

**Last year, we had a study group that looked at the new translation of  
the Mass**

**Central to the new translation is Sacred Scripture**

**From the opening prayer to the responsorial psalms**

**To the readings, the prayers after Communion**

**Parts of the Eucharistic prayer**

**Tying our Old Testament roots to the New Covenant**

**Even in our readings from the Old Testament at Mass**

**We have a 3 year cycle of readings**

**Every 3 years we go through between 85 and 90% of the O.T.**

**We not only have Sacred Scripture in our liturgies**

**We need them**

**St Jerome tells us:**

**Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ**

**So we see this is not an option**

**Our readings and homilies are important**

**They open our hearts to Christ through Scripture**

**Before Christ walked the earth**

**The Scriptures were meant to open the hearts of the Chosen**

**People to God**

**That is exactly what is happening in our 1<sup>st</sup> reading**

**The Israelite nation had been conquered**

**They had been exiled and were serving a foreign nation**

**Their land was occupied by this foreign power**

**Jerusalem was falling apart**

**Their sacred Temple was suffering from neglect**

**But God worked through the king**

**And Ezra and Nehemiah were appointed to lead the people back**

**And doing this, they came across a copy of the law**

**Something the people had lost track of**

**So Ezra reads and teaches from the law**

**From daybreak to midday**

**Men, women and children gathered to hear him**

**They were convicted by what they heard**

**And they responded with weeping and tears**

**But Nehemiah and Ezra told them this is a great day**

**They have been given a great gift**

**The law that had been lost was returned to them**

**So they would return to God**

**And they called for a celebration**

**Eat rich food**

**Drink sweet drinks**

**Rejoice in the Lord who is your strength**

**Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life**

**In our Gospel, Christ himself points to the Old Testament**

**He comes to Nazareth after teaching throughout Galilee**

**He goes into the Synagogue**

**He takes the scroll and selects a text from Isaiah**

**A prophet has been endowed with the Spirit**

**Anointed by the Lord**

**He brings good news of liberty, freedom from oppression**

**A year acceptable to the LORD**

**This is a Jubilee year**

**For the Israelite nation, the land was given them by God**

**Although they could lose it due to debts, it would not be lost forever**

**The new owners would only have use of the land for a certain  
period of time**

**When a Jubilee year was celebrated every 25 or 50 years**

**The land went back to the original owners**

**At the same time, all debts were forgiven**

**If any were imprisoned due to financial obligations, they were set free**

**Christ concludes his teaching with a bold proclamation**

**Today, in your hearing, these words are fulfilled**

**This resonates to us as well**

**Today, this hearing is fulfilled**

**Christ came to bring the Good news of salvation**

**To free those who are imprisoned**

**To free us from imprisonment**

**Imprisonment to sin**

**To ignorance**

**To the world**

**To our passions**

**From our prejudices**

**From whatever it is in our lives that keep us from Him**

**We are all imprisoned by something or someone**

**And we are all called to be free from this**

**But for this to become real, people have to hear it**

**Your words, LORD, are Spirit and life**

**This is where St Paul's letter comes into play**

**We are all part of the Body of Christ**

**In the unity of his body is a diversity of talents and gifts**

**Not all are teachers, not all are prophets**

**Not all are apostles; not all are healers**

**We need each other**

**Like the eye needs the ear for a healthy body to function**

**Like the hands need the feet**

**To prevent each from going their own way**

**All need the guidance of the head, Jesus Christ**

**Under his guidance, the diversity of the body is made greater by  
the unity**

**And the unity is strengthened by the diversity**

**It is not about dominance**

**It is about blending strengths to a common end**

**This is what brings us together as a faith**

**We see this in a real way in our parish**

**Taking the strengths and talents of 2 former parishes**

**St Gabriel and St John's**

**And blending them into Holy Family parish**

**So we can offer to our community Christ's voice**

**His hands and feet**

**So we can bring them the Good News in word and in action**

**Taking St Anthony's teaching to heart**

**Preach the Gospel at all times**

**Use words when necessary**

**This is why we need Sacred Scripture in our lives and in our liturgies**

**So we can know what we are called to**

**We need the law; not as a club**

**But as an instrument for instruction**

**So we can be convicted of our wayward path**

**And return to the LORD**

**We need the sacraments; again, not as a club**

**But to give us wisdom and strength to become the body of Christ  
in the world**

**Both of these, working together**

**So we can be a light to our brothers and sisters wherever we find  
them**

**Today, this passage is fulfilled in your hearing**

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