

January 8, 2026

Daily Reflections



BREAK FREE!

By Sister Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Excerpt from Today's Gospel

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

LUKE 4:18-19

Reflection

In this short passage from Luke, Jesus is informing us of his mission. He was sent to fulfill God's promise, as spoken so clearly in this passage from Luke. Taking each verse and breaking it open gives us a deeper insight into what the message is for us today.

The "bringing glad tidings to the poor" is teaching us to bring the Good News wherever we find the poor. This can be material poverty, poverty of spirit, or anyone in despair. It is such a temptation to turn away when we see those in need, expecting

“others” to seek ways to alleviate their suffering. It’s helpful to ask ourselves, in the moment, what am I being called to do? How might I respond?

Just before Christmas, my sister Molly was dropping off letters at the post office. A young man held the door for her as she was coming out. I noticed they were having a brief conversation as she asked him to step back inside because it was -15-degree windchill that day. When I asked her what they were talking about, she had asked him if he had a winter coat because what he was wearing was not at all warm enough for such bitterly cold weather. He replied that he didn’t have another “winter” coat. Molly then proceeded to give him a list of places he could go, within walking distance of the post office, where free coats, mittens and hats could be found. She asked if he knew where these places (churches and mission-driven organizations) were located and he said “yes.” Sounds easy – but what if she had just said “thank you” for holding the door open for her and gone on her way? That’s what I hope we can all do to “bring glad tidings to the poor,” by pausing and recognizing the need, the person, before us.

The bringing “liberty to the captives” captures my attention! I thought, aren’t we all “captives” to our own shortcomings, vices, or whatever hinders us from being our best selves? What do each of us need to lay down because it hinders our ability to live as we are called to live? Isn’t it time to release ourselves from our own captivity?

This message goes beyond us as well. First of all, Jesus is the one who liberates us, overcoming sin and death. So many of our brothers and sisters are bound by fear, shame, despair, sin, and habitual patterns that diminish one’s sense of freedom.

To bring liberty means to proclaim God’s love, mercy, and forgiveness. How might we accompany others toward healing (body, mind, or spirit) as they face struggles in their lives? It also is a call for us to advocate alongside those seeking to reform unjust systems, violence of all kind, human trafficking, and all the social ills of our day.

Through baptism, we share in Jesus’ mission to heal, teach, and proclaim the Good News. Let us see as God sees in order to “bring liberty to the captives” and “glad tidings” to the poor. May we live this Gospel message with courage and concrete actions that attest to our daily discipleship and desire to bring goodness and kindness into our world.



Sr. Jayne

Image created by Sister Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

For Pondering

- Who in your life needs to be reminded of the saving power of Christ? How will you respond?
- Who in your life is hindered in their ability to live freely their life in Christ? How might you accompany or assist them this day?
- What needs to be freed within you?

For Prayer

*Loving God,
you sent your Son to bring good news to the poor and liberty
to those held captive.
Free us from all that binds our heart, mind, and spirit.
May we live fully the love we receive and have in you.
Amen.*

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