

Lectionary readings: Jeremiah 1: 4-10; Psalm 71: 1-6; 1

Corinthians 13: 1-13; Luke 4: 21-30

For reflection and prayer

- **Jeremiah 1:** Jeremiah responded to God's call in a similar way I guess to how all of us would respond - with fear, almost panic, making excuses, feeling himself to be inadequate and unworthy of such a calling. But God says the same to us as He said to Jeremiah, 'Don't be afraid ... for I will be with you and take care of you.' God says to Jeremiah that there never has been a time when He hasn't known him, for He shaped him in his mother's womb. God's knowledge of us too is total and He has chosen each of us to use the gifts He has given us to serve Him in the unique way each of us can by His grace. God knows all about our lack of confidence, our feelings of inadequacy, our lack of self-worth, our self-doubt and all the rest. But He still calls us to put our hand in His and trust His presence in us. What do you believe God is calling you to? What do you want to say to God in response to His call to you?
- **Psalm 71:** *'In You, O Beloved, do I take refuge; let me never feel separated from You. In Your compassion come and refresh me; listen to my cry; answer my plea. Be to me a rock, a tower of strength, a strong arm to uphold me, as I abandon myself into Your hands. Be a very Presence to me as fear grips me For You, O Friend, are my hope, my strength ... upon You have I trusted from my birth, You whom I knew before my mother's womb. I continually sing praises to You.'* (Psalms for Praying) You might like to meditate on this version and hear God speaking to your heart.
- **1 Corinthians 13:** What can I say new about this passage? Hear what Henri Nouwen says: *'The final stage of the spiritual life is to so fully let go of all fear of the Father that it becomes possible to become like Him and to live out His divine compassion in my daily life.... Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. God's compassion is described by Jesus not simply to show me how willing God is to feel for me, or to forgive me my sins and offer me new life and happiness, but to invite me to become like God and to show the same compassion to others as He is showing to me.'* Paul is urging us to give ourselves in love to others just as God has given Himself in love to us. It is precisely this selfless giving of ourselves to others in love that is the mark of true discipleship. This is our calling as Christians. May we grow in love as individuals and as a church and become like God in love and forgiveness and compassion.
- **Luke 4:** Jesus sees Himself as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy - the Messiah who will set people free and bring healing and wholeness to them. He came from God to proclaim the Good News. But He was faced with a sceptical audience who thought they knew who He was. We too make judgements about people based on our superficial knowledge of them. But we can't know what is in the depths of people's hearts, any more than Jesus' contemporaries knew who Jesus was in the depths of His being. Jesus knew who He was and what He had been called to do and He would not be defined by what others thought or said. We too need to know who we are and what we have been called to do and have the courage to fulfil our mission despite what others think or say. May we too live by the Spirit of God as Jesus did.