

## **Jubilee year of hope: A year of the Lord's favour**

Twenty-one-year-old Matthew had been homeless for three years. Mark Russell (who was appointed head of the Church Army aged only thirty-one) met him on the streets of Charing Cross in London, bought him some food and led him to Christ.

As he was getting up to leave he said, 'Matthew, over the next month I am going to be on platforms speaking to thousands of people. What piece of advice do you want me to give to the Church today?' Matthew replied, 'The church's job is to stop arguing and *to bring people hope.*'

We can feel hopeless today, because of political leaders. Wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. There is personal lack of hope when it comes to our work, our relationships, fears for our children and their safety. In the UK, a recent Yougov poll shows only 31% of Britons said they were hopeful for the year ahead. There is a crisis of hope!

In Jesus, God brings you, and all humanity, new HOPE. This year, the church begins a jubilee year of hope. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus reads the prophet Isaiah's words about a Jubilee year of favour: "He has sent me... to proclaim the year of the Lord's **favour.**" In Jesus, God's favours *\*you\**. In Jesus, sharing in the life of his Catholic church in this parish, this year can be a year of **hope** for you, for us, for the world.

**Spirit** – Luke: Jesus announces that "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..." The spirit of the Lord came upon Jesus when he was baptised. God said, "You are *my* beloved Son, who is pleasing to me." Reject the lie that God has rejected you. In baptism, and faith, you are His, you are loved, you are pleasing to Him. Know your identity. Pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon you.

**Anointed** – Luke: "... because he has anointed me..." To be anointed means for God to set you apart for a special purpose. You are anointed in baptism

and Confirmation for a **purpose**. Reject the lie that you have no future or purpose. In Jer 29:11, God says "I know the [good] plans I have for you..." Ask God to reveal His purpose and plan for your life.

**Good News** – Luke: "to proclaim good news to the poor." We see so much bad news and poverty: mental health problems, financial poverty, loneliness, bereaving death, anxiety about health, concern about marriage, or hope for marriage. God sending Jesus is **Good News!** What Good News might Jesus want to bring the poor in your lives? How can you share that Good News?

**Liberty** - Luke: "He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives... and oppressed" Many people are in a form of captivity or oppression: addiction to drink, drugs, gambling, internet websites, phones, food. People can be oppressed by racism, bullying, identity lies about who we are, and what we can do. This year can be a year of **liberty** for you. through Jesus! Pray for Jesus to give you freedom and liberty.

**Sight** – Luke: "recovering of sight to the blind..." We need sight. It's difficult to see how politics will play out, in the UK or abroad. It's difficult to know how wars will end, and how peace will come in the Middle East, Ukraine, and other areas of oppression. It's difficult to see how we may get through this year caring for our sick family or friends. Jesus says he gives **sight**. Jesus calls himself the light of the world. Pray for **sight!**

**Fulfilled** – Luke: "'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" God's promise of hope can be fulfilled \*today\* in your life. St James says "don't just listen to God's word. Do what it says." Accept Jesus and follow him today. He will bring new **hope**.

## **Prayer**

*Picture Jesus right here announcing hope to you. Picture everyone fixing their eyes upon him.*

Father, thank you that in Jesus and in this Jubilee Year, you announce a year of **favour** over my life, to bring me new hope.

**Spirit** of the Lord, come upon me. Let me feel and know God's love always.

**Anoint** me, set me apart. Help me to live with even more **purpose**.

Jesus, help me know your **Good News**, and to share it generously to the poor.

Give me even more **liberty** and freedom, especially in areas where I can feel captive.

Give **sight** to me and leaders, to see ways ahead and not lose sight of you.

Help me to bring new to all people by deeds and words, and bring people **hope**.