

Gospel Reflection

“Note, for example, how the double word ‘repent ... believe’ was immediately matched by the double deed of leaving and following. The summoning of men to join him was an essential part of Jesus’ vocation, a part which he undertook at once. The first who ‘left ... and followed’ were four fishermen. In describing their response, Mark gave only a glimpse of what originally must have been a much longer episode. This quartet may well have been disciples of John and recipients of his baptism (John. 1:35). They probably had met Jesus on earlier occasions. They almost certainly had heard Jesus give at greater length his proclamation. But the miracle lies in the fact that they had accepted it: Is the time fulfilled? Yes. Must we ‘repent, and believe’? Yes. Symbolically the story stressed two things about these men. First, they had abruptly and completely broken away from the routines of their job and from securities of their home. Second, Jesus had pledged to teach them how to fish for men... This initial story reminded every Christian reader of the intended outcome of his own decision to leave and follow. The story of the call of this quartet also suggested to early readers that Jesus had begun his task of creating the Church at the very outset.”

P.S. Minear - St Mark

Prayer over the Offerings

*Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray, and in sanctifying them
grant that they may profit us for salvation.*

Prayer after Communion

*Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, receiving the grace by which you
bring us to new life, we may always glory in your gift.*

Third Sunday

Year B

24th January 2021

Everything Begins with the Good News



As Jonah brought life to the people of Nineveh by preaching God's word, so Jesus brings life to the whole world. Today we listen to the beginning of Mark's Gospel. After Jesus' baptism and his temptation in the wilderness, he appears in Galilee. There his mission begins: '*He proclaimed the Good News from God*'. Mark doesn't just recall Jesus' words, but he presents Jesus as THE GOOD NEWS. The uttered words of Jesus, the Good News from God, demands a response. The humble fishermen give us the example, they leave everything and follow him.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to your good pleasure, that in the name of your beloved Son we may abound in good works.

Jonah 3: 1-5, 10

The word of the Lord was addressed to Jonah: 'Up!' he said 'Go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach to them as I told you to.' Jonah set out and went to Nineveh in obedience to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was a city great beyond compare: it took three days to cross it. Jonah went on into the city, making a day's journey. He preached in these words, 'Only forty days more and Nineveh is going to be destroyed.' And the people of Nineveh believed in God; they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least.

God saw their efforts to renounce their evil behaviour, and God relented: he did not inflict on them the disaster which he had threatened.

The Book of Jonah, which comes towards the end of the Old Testament, is not a historical book but a story or a parable, emphasising God's love for all peoples. Considered to be composed after the Exile (538 BC), it is set much earlier when the powerful Assyrian nation was on the verge of conquering a struggling and defeated Israel. In the Book, we hear how the prophet Jonah reluctantly goes to Nineveh, a royal Assyrian City, to preach repentance. And this is the point: As soon as the pagans - Israel's enemies - hear God's word, they repent and God saves them. God's word brings life! It is the vocation of every Christian to live God's word and to take it to their brothers and sisters.

Psalms 24(25):4-6,7b-9

*Lord, make me know your ways. Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me: for you are God my saviour.
Remember your mercy, Lord, and the love you have shown from of old.
In your love remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord.
The Lord is good and upright. He shows the path to those who stray,
He guides the humble in the right path, He teaches his way to the poor.*

1 Corinthians 7: 29-31

Brothers: our time is growing short. Those who have wives should live as though they had none, and those who mourn should live as though they had nothing to mourn for; those who are enjoying life should live as though there were nothing to laugh about; those whose life is buying things should live as though they had nothing of their own; and those who have to deal with the world should not become engrossed in it. I say this because the world as we know it is passing away.

Today we hear the second of five exerts from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians written around 55AD. Remember, Corinth was a thriving Greek city & sea port and in the midst of all the hustle and bustle, Paul seeks to address the many problems in the young church. Today he calls on them (and us) to keep our eyes on Christ, to seek life in him and not to become engrossed in the affairs of this world.

*Alleluia, Alleluia! The kingdom of God is close at hand:
repent, and believe the Good News. Alleluia!*

Mark 1:14-20

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake - for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men.' And at once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.

