

Third Sunday of Ordinary Time

January 22, 2017



Almighty every-living God,  
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,  
that in the name of your beloved Son  
we may abound in good works.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God forever and ever. Amen.

Collect for the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time

Have you ever had your schedule changed? Have you ever had your priorities rearranged? Have you ever been called to do something for which you feel totally unequipped? Have you ever been called to do something that was totally out of your mindset? This is absolutely what is happening in the Gospel for today. (Matthew 4:12-23)



Jesus had left his hometown of Nazareth where he grew up to go further north to the more commercial city of Capernaum. Capernaum was a city where there were great fishing industries, as it was located on the north-west coast of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus moved there after he heard of the arrest of John the Baptist. There, he was continuing John's mission by proclaiming the message of repentance. "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" was what Jesus was preaching.

In moving to this area Jesus was fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy. (Isaiah 8:23-9:3) in the message of Jesus he was bringing "*abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as people making merry...*"

As Jesus was in Capernaum, walking along the sea of Galilee "*he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea ... he said to them, come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" Continuing his walk, Jesus came upon two other brothers, "*James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets.*" In the call of these four men, there are two significant phrases, "*at once*" and "*immediately*". We do not know the

thought process that these four went through but we see them following Jesus. Their plans and priorities were definitely changed by this call. They left their business and their family to follow this man whom they may have known little about.

Something very similar happened to me, Sister Ellen. I was home in Buffalo for Christmas holidays and was due to return to Chassell on January 8th. On Saturday night, January 7th, I became very weak and early Sunday morning I was taken to the hospital where I spent four days. I was then transferred to Elderwood, Wheatfield (2600 Niagara Falls Blvd., Niagara Falls, New York, 14304) for rehab. People here are slowly discovering that I am a Catholic sister. They are busy telling me their life stories.

I have a roommate, who had a cerebral hemorrhage on Christmas day, is mobile but does not remember very much. I have discovered that it is important for me to keep encouraging her to eat.

Unfortunately on Tuesday she tried to get up on her own and fell on the floor. My role in this whole event was to get help and settle everyone down. My roommate and I prayed together while we were waiting for aide to come. She is a Catholic whose parish is not far from here and so praying the Our Father, the Glory be, and the Hail Mary gave her some comfort as she was sitting on the floor and I was in my bed. After we had waited for quite a period of time, I got out of bed and tottered down the hall to get some help. We are quite the pair!



Some of the aides have come into the room to share with me some of their life events. They have also come in to ask questions and get some problem solved. In PT the therapists have shared about their families and even asked advice about future schooling for their children. In OT I have had a different person every day and on Tuesday they were quite dependent on me to cajole my roommate to do her work. I keep saying "no pain, no gain" to her and others in our therapy groups.

My being in Buffalo and this extended-stay is certainly not in my plans. The Lord must have something in mind that I do not know about. *My plans, my agenda, my priorities, my schedule* has nothing to do with my extended stay. God is in control!

## Prayer for the Grace to Age Well

*When the signs of age begin to mark my body  
(and still more when they touch my mind);  
when the ill that is to diminish me or carry me off  
strikes from without or is born within me;  
when the painful moment comes in which I suddenly awaken  
to the fact that I am ill or growing old;  
and above all at that last moment when I feel I am losing hold of myself  
and am absolutely passive within the hands  
of the great unknown forces that have formed me;  
in all those dark moments, O God,  
grant that I may understand that it is you  
(provided only my faith is strong enough)  
who are painfully parting the fibers of my being  
in order to penetrate to the very marrow  
of my substance and bear me away within yourself.*

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.



This past week, as a democracy, President Donald Trump was installed as our 45th president. No matter who we voted for, it is important that we see him as our leader. It is also important that we do our civic duty by being aware of what is happening and letting our president and congressional leaders hear our voices. We are *called* to be good citizens no matter what our priorities, schedules or stances might be. The challenge of inviting Catholics to exercise "faithful citizenship" requires more than instruction and formation in the Church's teaching. Our tradition of worship, centered in the Eucharist, also calls us to put our faith into action in the political arena. The connection between liturgy and life is learned through participation in worship experiences that enlighten our spirits and move our hearts to action. An important section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, in fact, "*The Eucharist commits us to the poor. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren.*" (CCC #1397) Being good citizens means that we must look out for the poorest of the poor in our midst, and make our governmental officials aware of them and their needs.

- + *For the Church, that we may be a witness to Christ's love by practicing charity and promoting justice and peace throughout the world . . .*
- + *For Catholics throughout our nation, that the values of our faith may guide us as we exercise our responsibility . . .*
- + *For the members of this community, that we may find ways to help build a world of greater respect for human life and human dignity . . .*
- + *For those who serve in elected office, that they may lead with courage and wisdom, reflecting the Church's teaching that the moral test of our society is how the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable are faring . . .*
- + *For all citizens of the United States, that we are lead to a world of greater justice and peace . . .*
- + *For those who are suffering from poverty and injustice, that government decisions lead to policies and programs that help them live in dignity . . .*
- + *For all who have been elected to public office might use their offices to protect the unborn and promote the dignity of the poor and vulnerable . . .*
- + *For the earth, that our nation's leaders will be inspired by God's Spirit to protect all of His creation . . .*
- + *For workers around the world, especially children who work long hours for little pay, that we might all seek ways to promote fairness, justice, and dignity in their lives . . .*
- + *For leaders around world, that they might find ways to bring an end to war and violence, and promote peace and development for all nations . . .*

*Gracious and loving God, let your Spirit be with us. Hear our prayers, and increase in us the will to follow your Son Jesus. Help us to draw on the resources of our faith as we use the opportunities of our democracy to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and rights of the human person, especially the poor and vulnerable. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.*