

2021 January 24

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading:

First: *Jonah 1.3-5, 10, "God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said." (10b)*

The Psalm: *25, "Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God my salvation." (5)*

Second: *1 Corinthians 7.29-31, "The present form of this world is passing away." (31b)*

The Gospel: *Mark 1.14-20, "The kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good News." (15)*

Be The Good News

People of Nineveh are called to repentance by Jonah, the Prophet. The psalmist sings about the steadfast love and mercy of God. Paul reminds Corinthians of the shortness of time left. Jesus summons us to repentance. Mark presents the call of Jesus for repentance and acceptance of the kingdom before he chooses his disciples.

Jesus announces to the Israelites that the time is ripe for the arrival of the kingdom and invites them to believe in the good news. Here the good news is Jesus himself. He continues to be the Good News for the world in our time too. Then he proceeds to choose his disciples. Once they were chosen and commissioned he makes them the good news. They in turn made us the good news to the world today. Good news that we are commissioned to give, that we give, and that we must give is Jesus, the Messiah. Ultimately it is the call of Jesus to us to be the good news to the world. Jesus came to show the face of God to the world. Today we have to be the face of Jesus in our world.

Someone every now and then must remind us of this great call and mission, that is, we are the good news of Jesus to this world today. That someone could be you and I to each other, spouses, parents and children, siblings, neighbours, colleagues, buddies, every one to each other. That is the way God designed the mission of Jesus to be accomplished within the short span of time St. Paul refers to. On the Epiphany Sunday we heard from Isaiah the call to "*arise and shine.*" By becoming the Good News of Jesus in the world, in our world, this arising and shining will happen in our time. Our reluctance to be the good news will delay the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus, and consequently the coming of him in glory, coming of the Parousia.

Jesus became the good news by being involved with the people. That involvement landed him being tortured and killed. That too was the plan he knowingly and willingly chose to accomplish his mission. Jonah was reluctant and afraid to go to Nineveh. This was because it was a risky mission. If the people were not to listen and respond properly to Jonah his life would have been in danger. As a human person he was afraid. But God accomplishes his designs through the ones he calls and sends. And Jonah is finally made to take up that risk and thereby he became the good news to the people of Nineveh, and God turned away from destroying them. To become the good news of Jesus in our world involves a risk much greater than the one Jonah took upon himself. There is no reward in the kingdom of God without the risk in this kingdom of man. The invitation to be the good news of Jesus is an invitation to risk our lives. If our world is to be won for God, if we need to take our world out of the mess in which it is immersed today, there should be people to risk their lives and to move away from their comfort zones. Are you willing?

(The readings of the day are given at the beginning. The numbers in parentheses refer to the quotes from them. Good to go through the readings beforehand to properly understand the Reflections)

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