

READINGS AND REFLECTION FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A READING FROM THE PROPHET JONAH 3:1-5, 10

The word of the Lord was addressed to Jonah: 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.”
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 Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM PSALM 24:4-9

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.
TEACH ME YOUR WAYS, O LORD.

Remember your mercy, Lord, and the love you have shown from of old.
In your love remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord.
TEACH ME YOUR WAYS, 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.
TEACH ME YOUR WAYS, O LORD.

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Mark 1:15: The kingdom of God is near: believe the Good News!

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO 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.”

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

from Fr Michael Fallon MSC and Sr Patricia Stevenson RSJ

Theology is a community's reflection on its faith so it can express as clearly as possible what it believes. Anselm's classical definition is: *Theology is faith seeking understanding.*

The Jonah story is a *story* focussing on God's Will being fulfilled. It was a challenge to God's own Chosen people, that the Ninevites - Gentiles - repented! We learn that Nineveh, Israel and all of us will account for our sin and the repentant will be forgiven.

Corinth, a city of about 300 000 people, was rampant with commercial greed, slaves, traders and lax morals. Paul calls all of us as well - in whatever circumstances we find ourselves - to discover the ways in which we have been graced by God to live a loving life.

Mark presents how the disciples and we today, called by Jesus, need to follow him, and to leave behind anything, however important, that impedes our journeying with him.

These texts are filled with life lessons for us in our lives with God and with one another.

Both Jonah and the disciples let go of known pasts for unknown futures.

Discipleship has always had and will always have - *a price.*

For Jonah, water symbolised life and death. Jesus' followers were called from the life-giving Sea of Galilee to grow as disciples through the 'dry gullies' and 'dead ends' to come.

Our communities must discern, companion, support, cultivate, educate and guide today's disciples in whatever way the disciples seek to serve God and others.

Let's pray for all preparing for the Plenary Council beginning in October, this year.