

*****. This Sunday, the 3rd of the year was designated by Pope Francis in 2019, as the ***Sunday of the Word of God***. It is an annual celebration of the gift of Scripture, intended to encourage us to read it, to grow in our knowledge and love of the Word of God and allow us to be formed by it in the way we live our lives and our relationships. It is particularly appropriate in that this Sunday we begin reading the Gospel of Mark and hear him proclaiming the Kingdom and calling his first disciples. This call and proclamation are also addressed to us.

Praying towards Sunday – Annie Osdiak



“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.

THE GOSPEL Mark 1:14-20

Jesus called
Simon and Andrew,
fishermen.

It
was
radical.

They dropped their nets.
James and John left their boats,
and also their father,
who was sitting
in a boat
too.

Jesus,
we know
that you are
calling us
also,

(as unlikely a choice as were the fishermen),

to take your word and grace
to everyone.

We want to leave our boats
and drop our nets.
Choose us,
please.

THE FIRST READING Jonah 3:1-5, 10

*The word of the Lord came to Jonah. ... So Jonah made ready
and went to Nineveh, according to the Lord's bidding.*

When God called him,
Jonah at first
ran away.

God calls us
to turn to
him
instead
of running away.

Lord,
when we think we have turned
as far and as often
as we can,
help us turn
again.

THE SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

I tell you, brothers and sisters, the time is running out.

Yes,
time flies.
—At warp speed.

Christ, let us not cling
to this world.

Help us detach
from
everything but love.

Reflection:

The readings for this Sunday call us to follow the Lord's ways. This may involve some change of priorities and direction for us as we seek to move towards the kingdom of God ourselves.

In the First Reading, we see God show mercy to the people of Nineveh. They renounce their evil ways in response to Jonah preaching the word of God.

The Psalmist recognises the Lord as his saviour, a God full of goodness and mercy, who has always loved him. He asks the Lord, his teacher, to show him the true path.

At the beginning of St Mark's Gospel, again we hear of people changing their ways. Jesus begins his ministry by finding and inviting the first disciples to leave their work as fishermen and follow him for greater things.

Though the Second Reading sounds challenging, its intention is to encourage us to live in a way that is guided by the love of Christ, and shows our faith and hope in the kingdom of God. We are called to live in open freedom and detachment – it is who we are, that counts.

Perhaps during this coming week, I can pray for the grace to be open to any change the Lord asks me to make, so that I can respond better to his call and be ready to go wherever he is asking me.

'Lord, make me know your ways Lord, teach me your paths.' *Responsorial Psalm*

The kingdom of God is close at hand: believe the good news. *Gospel Acclamation*

Look towards the Lord and be radiant. *Communion Antiphon*

Pope Francis says in 'Laudato si': Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change.

{This Reflection/Introduction to the Readings is taken from Pathways to God, a Jesuit site in the U.K.}