

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, 21 January 2024

Scriptures: Jonah 3:1-5,10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

Homily: Fr. Ken

Circumstances, motivations, events, surprises, and all the like, influence people who switch their path in life to a new one.

In the Gospel narrative, we hear about four seemingly average fishermen—Simon, Andrew, James, and John—who literally dropped their fishing nets when Jesus called them to follow him. They left behind their daily routines at the Sea of Galilee when Jesus called each of them to a new unexpected life.

Both religious and not so religious people today have experienced God showing up in the ordinary places of life, and interrupting the daily routines. This was also the experience of Jonah in the first scripture reading, who was sent by God on a mission to the city of Nineveh.

When all these individuals accepted God's invitation, their lives were different forever. God's call led them into an uncertain but inspirational future.

Whatever happens in each of our lives—who we meet, what we do, where we go—in all the events of life, there is in that life, the call of Jesus, to "follow me".

It is the call to actively participate in the building up of the Kingdom of God—that is, to bring love, justice, and peace to our world. It is always about moving to a larger vision, orienting life in a new direction and experiencing that our own story of life is connected to a much larger story of life, God's life. It happens in the casting and mending of nets. It happens in the context of our everyday activities: work, school, families, paying the bills, running errands, preparing dinner, maintaining relationships and just trying to do the right thing. These are the times and places

Jesus shows up and calls us into a new way of being, and our world changes.

The call to follow Jesus is the call to discipleship. If we take Christian discipleship seriously, it is a challenging path. It was not easy then and it will not be easy now. To follow Jesus, in other words, is to follow the one who turns the world upside down. Christian discipleship is the commitment to live a Gospel life, a marginal life in this place, at this time, whatever the cost.

True discipleship takes the side of those who are poor, minorities, outcasts, people who are reviled and rejected. True discipleship means being a witness for justice and peace even in situations of injustice and war. When we enter into our callings we have no idea how it will all end up. We choose our careers and jobs hoping that we can use the gifts and talents God has given us.

The call to follow Jesus is the call to discipleship. Christ is calling each one of us. How will we respond?

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