

Cycle B Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1 JON 3:1-5, 10

The word of the LORD came to Jonah, saying: "Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you." So Jonah made ready and went to Nineveh, according to the LORD'S bidding. Now Nineveh was an enormously large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began his journey through the city, and had gone but a single day's walk announcing, "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed, " when the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth. When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil that he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.

Responsorial Psalm PS 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

R. (4a) Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths, Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.

R. Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Remember that your compassion, O LORD, and your love are from of old. In your kindness remember me, because of your goodness, O LORD.

R. Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Good and upright is the LORD; thus he shows sinners the way. He guides the humble to justice and teaches the humble his way.

R. Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Reading 11 1 COR 7:29-31

I tell you, brothers and sisters, the time is running out. From now on, let those having wives act as not having them, those weeping as not weeping, those rejoicing as not rejoicing, those buying as not owning, those using the world as not using it fully. For the world in its present form is passing away.

Gospel MK 1:14-20

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

*After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:
"This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the
gospel."*

Every day we hear someone mention what is right and what is wrong with the world. Unfortunately, we mostly hear what is wrong, too often about how awful things are. It is difficult to have an optimistic vision, to see ways we have of making our world a better place in which to live...it is hard to have a vision of what we can do that is positive, rather than being overwhelmed and made anxious by the news.

Jesus also lived in a troubled world, a world that was in many aspects in worse shape than the one in which we live today. Justice was a joke in Jesus' time; Roman legions oppressed people without mercy, while the Romans themselves lived in a great lie rejecting God.

Into all of this God sent Jesus Christ to help mankind have the light of optimistic vision, to give us the faith, the hope, the love...and, the courage to make our world become everything God dreamed it could be when He created it in the first place. Jesus is resolved to accomplish this purpose one life at a time. And He will not be denied. His cousin was arrested, and soon they would be coming after Him...but He wasn't sad or angry, rather He was optimistic proclaiming the Gospel, the Good News.

Did you see the January 15, 2018 issue of TIME magazine? The cover special report headline was "The Optimists." I recommend you get a copy and read the 17 uplifting articles. The Editor said: *"Reading the news today does not exactly leave you feeling optimistic. Hurricanes in the Americas. Horrific mass shootings. Global tensions over nuclear arms. Bloody civil wars in Syria and Yemen. Your heart breaks for every person*

who is touched by these tragedies. Even for those of us lucky enough not to be directly affected, it may feel like the world is falling apart.

But these events—as awful as they are—have happened in the context of a bigger, positive trend. [You see,] on the whole, the world is getting better.

This is not some naively optimistic view; it's backed by data. Look at the number of children who die before their fifth birthday. Since 1990, that figure has been cut in half. That means 122 million children have been saved in [27 years], and countless families have been spared the heartbreak of losing a child.

And that's just one measure. In 1990, more than a third of the global population lived in extreme poverty; today only about [1 in 10] do.... Women are gaining political power and now make up more than [20%] of national parliaments...and the world is finally starting to listen when women speak up about [harassment and abuse.] More than 90% of all children in the world attend primary school. In the U.S., you are far less likely to die on the job or in a car than your grandparents were. [I could go on.]

I'm not trying to downplay the work that remains. Being an optimist doesn't mean you ignore tragedy and injustice. It means you're inspired to look for people making progress on those fronts, and to help spread that progress more widely. If [we are] shocked by the idea of millions of children dying, [we]ask: Who is good at saving kids, and how can we help them do more?"

From today's Gospel we know that the mission of Christ was to make us responsible, and to make us take responsibility for ourselves first...to make something good and decent out of our own lives....with our families, our children, our grandchildren, our brothers and sisters, our nieces and nephews...with our friends...with our neighbors. Life is God's gift to us. So what we do with it is our gift to God. It is also our gift to those around us.

The Good News is that we are members of a very vibrant and optimistic Catholic Church that is changing the world: the world's Catholic population has doubled in the last 30 years to 1.3 billion, and is expanding by 12.5 million baptisms annually. Vatican Radio broadcasts in 47 languages. The Holy See has a permanent presence in some 40 international organizations such as the United Nations and the Arab League. 193 countries enjoy diplomatic ties to the Vatican. We are leaders advocating the many ways to respect and support the sanctity of all life, from conception to natural death. Even in countries with only small Catholic minorities, the church wields considerable clout as the world's largest nongovernmental provider of education and health care, and we are a major donor of emergency aid.

Jesus cries out to us and tells us that a better world is within our reach; it's within our grasp. Someone said, *"Taking life by the yard is hard, but life taken by the inch is a cinch. If you see something, do something!"* We must respond to life as it is, in the moment, one day at a time. That is the only way to deal with reality.

The call of Jesus we just heard in today's Gospel is not a call issued simply to twelve Jewish men 2,000 years ago. It is an insistent call, and urgent call, a demanding call...to you and me here and now, today, we who have been called by God to receive the Bread of Life from this altar and then to leave this church on a mission. We are to leave here as those who are sent, sent with the Twelve Apostles to change the world.

You see the simple truth is that St. Brendan's has been changing the world around us for the last 17 years....and, the 4000 families and 10,000 men, women and children registered here, we are learning to embrace Christ's optimistic vision, we are being inspired to change the world every day, with everyone we meet!! God Bless You!

Now, that's Good News!