

# Read

Isaiah 8:23–9:3

Psalm 27:1, 4, 13–14

1 Corinthians 1:10–13, 17

Matthew 4:12–23 or 4:12–17

## LIVING THE WORD

### Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 26, 2020



#### REFLECTION

Notice the urgency in the disciples' response to Jesus' invitation. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen tending to their daily labor when a stranger appears on the shore and says, "Come, after me" (Matthew 4:19). The men immediately leave their nets and boats to follow Jesus. They do not stop to ask questions, nor do they offer any sort of explanation or excuse for why they are unable to follow. Rather, they accept the invitation and move forward in their relationship with the Lord.

Notice, also, where Jesus speaks to the first disciples. He does not invite them to a fancy dinner and offer an outlined business proposition. Instead, Jesus invites the first disciples in their ordinary places of work. The call itself was not extraordinary, nor was it elaborate or confusing. Jesus met the disciples where they were and simply said, "Come after me" (Matthew 4:19).

The same is true for us. Jesus does not necessarily call us in bombastic, grandiose ways. Jesus instead calls us amid our everyday routine. Jesus speaks to us in our studies and work, through our friends and families, and especially in the things that make us happy. We must recognize Jesus' call amid the ordinary events of our lives and respond without hesitation or excuses.



#### ACTION

As you begin each day this week, ask God to help you be aware of his presence throughout your day, especially in the small, possibly unnoticed ways. At the end of the day, recall each of these encounters with God and offer a prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving.

*God of goodness,  
help us to trust you,  
listen to your guidance,  
and to thank you for the gifts you  
have bestowed upon us.  
May we be always faithful to you.  
Through Christ our Lord.*



*Amen.*

#### ? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How have you heard the voice of God in your own life?
- ❖ What are some things that prevent you from hearing and following God's voice?



January 26, 2020

## THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### LECTIONARY #67A

Isaiah 8:23–9:3

Psalm 27:1, 4, 13–14

1 Corinthians 1:10–13, 17

Matthew 4:12–23 or 4:12–17

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

The earliest days of Jesus' public ministry are recorded in Matthew 4. Jesus hears of John's arrest and goes forth to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah. The message of the need for repentance and the nearness of the Kingdom of Heaven is front and center. The first disciples, all fishermen, are called.

**Q FOCUS:** *The Great Light begins Jesus' ministry.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

On January 25, we celebrate the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle. Previously known as Saul, his focus had been persecuting Christians. His conversion forever changed the trajectory upon which the young Christian community was heading; Paul became the greatest promoter of spreading the Church's message.

### Church Teaching Connection

"In order that this sacrament of healing [Penance] may truly achieve its purpose among Christ's faithful, it must take root in their whole lives and move them to more fervent service of God and neighbor. The celebration . . . offers its life as a spiritual sacrifice in praise of God's glory" (*Rite of Penance*, 7).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Matthew 4:12–17

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:

*Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,  
the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles,  
the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light,  
on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death  
light has arisen.*

From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

Today's Gospel reading is a pivotal moment in the early days of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus had just spent forty days and forty nights in the desert, where he was tempted multiple times by the devil.

► **What do you remember about the account of Jesus having been in the desert and his temptations by the devil?**

Each time he was tempted, Jesus resisted what the devil promised. Now, Jesus hears that John has been arrested.

► **Who is this John that was arrested?**

It is John the Baptist, Jesus' first cousin, who had fulfilled his mission of preparing the way for Jesus to begin his own mission.

The Gospel accounts of Jesus as an adult, early in his ministry, begin with his being closely linked with what John was doing in preaching a message of repentance. John truly was preparing the way for the coming of Jesus. Now that John is no longer front and center in the Gospel story, Jesus goes forth on his own accord to start his ministry to and with people.

Today's reading says that Jesus “withdrew to Galilee,” ultimately going to live in the town of Capernaum, which is located by the Sea of Galilee.

► **Why did Jesus go to this location by the sea?**

The text says that he went there to fulfill a prophecy that had been made about him.

► **What do you know about the prophecies about Jesus that we read in the Old Testament?**

The particular prophecy envisioned by the prophet Isaiah that we read about in today's Gospel predicts that a light would arise in a land of great darkness.

► **What comes to mind when you read or hear this passage?**

► **What do you think of when you hear about these two contrasting images of light and darkness?**

► **Does this passage sound familiar to you?**

► **Are there other references to “light” in Sacred Scripture that you are aware of?**

► **Why would Jesus be compared to the image of light?**

Once Isaiah's prophecy of the coming of the light into the darkness is referenced, Jesus inaugurates his public ministry with a proclamation about the Kingdom of Heaven being near and that people need to repent in their lives.

► **How do you feel in hearing this message that Jesus preaches?**

► **Can you examine your own life and reflect upon your need for repentance?**

► **Why would we need to repent in the first place?**

The longer version of today's Gospel reading from Matthew includes the calling of the first disciples who end up following Jesus in his ministry. The first two people who he calls are two brothers, Simon and Andrew. The next couple of disciples that Jesus calls are two other brothers, James and John.

► **What do these two sets of brothers have in common?**

All four of them were working as fishermen at the time that Jesus called them to follow him.

► **How did they respond to Jesus' call?**

They left what they were doing behind and they went and followed him immediately.

► **What are some of the things that you need to leave behind in your life to authentically follow Jesus?**

## Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 124.

**What are some of the things that you and people your age struggle with in order to follow Jesus ?**

**What steps can you take to repent in order to be open to the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven?**

## Act on the Word

### On the Road with Jesus

*For this activity, you will need some maps of the Holy Land that show the areas in which Jesus spent his public ministry. You can find maps such as these in the back of a Bible (particularly study Bibles) or online. You will also need copies of Bibles for the youth to explore the "lands of Jesus."*

Begin with the following statements: "In today's Gospel reading, we witness Jesus on the road. He moves from Nazareth to a town called Capernaum. Different regions are mentioned as well. Let us spend some time exploring the lands of Jesus." Then, divide the large group up into smaller groups for their exploration. Using the maps that you have available, invite the youth to learn about the areas of the Holy Land in which Jesus lived.

Pass out Bibles that they can use to skim through the Gospels to explore the areas in which Jesus moved. Invite each group to focus in on a particular Gospel to explore. Have the young people start with his birth in Bethlehem, he and his family's exile in Egypt, his home in Nazareth, all of his travels throughout Galilee and Judea, up until his final arrival in Jerusalem and the subsequent events of Holy Week that he experienced in that city. Invite each group to report back to the large group as to what they learned about the lands in which Jesus lived, breathed, moved, and walked during his lifetime.

## Light in the Darkness

*The goal of this discussion is to invite the young people to reflect upon the darkness that exists in the world today and how Jesus Christ is a light to the nations in this day and time.*

Begin a discussion with a rereading of the these lines which come near the end of today's Gospel text: "the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen." Have the youth spend some time in discussion examining how the beginning of these lines apply to their experience of the world today. What is the darkness that exists in the global world? What darkness exists within their country? What are the dark corners of the local communities? Then, shift the discussion to look at the very end of these lines that focus on the reality of a light that arose with the coming of the Christ. Ask them how they see the light of Christ engaging the darkness that does exist in the world today. Have them think of ideas as to how they can live into their baptismal call to receive the Light of Christ and to share it with their world.

## Closing Prayer

*Eternal God,  
you are the Lord of every nation  
and your care extends to all who live and to all  
who have died.  
Teach us to love all people as you love them.  
May we never allow prejudice or politics to blind  
us to your presence in every person.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*