

Read

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

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

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

LIVING THE WORD

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 24, 2021



REFLECTION

Do you see what Jesus did there? Fishermen will be made into “fishers-of-men.” It’s a cute, pun-like turn-of-phrase that points to the intimate knowledge Christ has for each of us. Fishing in ancient Israel was long, arduous work that involved letting down nets and gathering at different times, in different places, sometimes with little success. These fishermen knew that despite frustrations, it was essential to keep going out there and try. Within that play on words, Jesus’ invitation to follow was paired with a very intentional phrase “I will make you” (Mark 1:17). The gifts and talents that these guys had as professional fishermen were not easily translatable to ministry, but with God, all things are possible. It wasn’t a question of skillset; all they needed was a willingness to follow Jesus and allow Him to fashion them into leaders. God doesn’t call the qualified; God qualifies the called.



ACTION

Have you ever been asked to do something that you didn’t feel qualified, or ready, to do? Discipleship involves a willingness to trust God, and this trust requires courage. This is especially true when God calls you to step out of your comfort zone, to go against the flow, to do something different and unexpected. It’s a mistake to think of courage as a lack of fear; in fact, courage is knowingly facing your fears and following through with the right action anyway. In our faith tradition, we know this quality as the cardinal virtue of fortitude. We strengthen this habit as we continue to choose to practice it—when we keep going out there and keep trying, despite frustrations, despite fears. As you listen and respond to God’s call in your life, practice the virtue of courage.

“Have the courage to go against the tide of current values that do not conform to the path of Jesus.”

—Pope Francis



? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Do you have the courage to let God make you into what he is calling you to be?
- ❖ How is God calling you to step out of your comfort zone?



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THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #68B

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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 Kingdom of God is here and now! Jesus begins his ministry by proclaiming this important news. He was telling people that God's promise of salvation was being fulfilled at that very moment through his life. After making this announcement, he immediately begins to call the Apostles and other disciples to follow him. He calls every one of us today and we respond to Christ's call in our lives; we choose that response every day of our lives. We pray that our ears and eyes will be open to recognize Christ's presence. We pray that our hearts will be open to transformation through his grace and love.

Q FOCUS: *Jesus calls each one of us; we respond to God's presence by following Christ.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week on Monday, January 25, we observe the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle. This great saint and prolific writer experienced a great conversion of heart very suddenly and unexpectedly. This is not your ordinary conversion story. (You can read about it in Acts 9:1-30.) Like Paul, we are called to allow grace to totally permeate our hearts, changing and transforming us.

Church Teaching Connection

Metanoia is a Greek word that refers to a total and complete transformation that reaches all aspects of human understanding and perception. It is not only about changing one's mind or doing something different; it is a shift in perspective. This shift occurs through grace and comes to us through the Gospel. We are called to conversion in Christ; we are called to *metanoia* and to turn our hearts to our Lord. Our interaction with the world around us is altered through this tremendous change (*Ecclesia in America*, 26).

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

Mark 1:14-20

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

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

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.

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:

► What does it mean to have a calling? Where does the calling come from?

► When Jesus called people, what did he ask of them?

In today's reading, Jesus traveled to Galilee sharing the Good News. He asked people to repent. He also asked them to believe in the Good News he came to share. These two things are connected. When we turn away from our sins, we are better able to hear and receive Jesus' Good News in our lives. Our Lord calls to each of us, and each of us must have a response to that call. In the Gospel reading, Jesus was preaching directly to the people; they could hear him, see him, and experience or witness miracles firsthand. Their senses were saturated in God as he walked this earth! Still, they had a choice: listen to the Lord or, close their ears to him. Our response to Jesus is much the same; either we open our eyes, ears, and hearts to him, or we choose to close ourselves to him.

► What are some ways in which you can demonstrate your choice to respond to God? What would it look like if you were to ignore or reject Jesus' call?

In the reading, Jesus made a specific call for two pairs of brothers, Simon and Andrew, and James and John, to follow him. These men were hard at work in their fishing boats. The brothers, along with their father, would have used large nets to catch fish in the Sea of Galilee. Both families would have eaten the

fish and sold them to support themselves. Totally dependent on the income from fishing, the men typically would not have left their boats or their work in the middle of a working day—their daily bread depended on their fishing. However, when Jesus called them, the men responded immediately and stepped away from their nets. Can you imagine turning away from your primary source of food and your ability to obtain future meals? Turning away from your comfortable home? Leaving those you know and love? Can you imagine leaving all these comforts to follow a man you didn't know? The brothers responded to Jesus with radical faith! Jesus is the only person we would ever follow with such devotion—indeed, only God is worthy of such devotion.

► How does our devotion to Jesus change our hearts entirely?

When Jesus begins his ministry, as we hear in today's Gospel reading, the Greek text of this passage references the word *kairos* when describing the time that had begun. This is important to note because scholars tell us that the word *kairos* refers to a special time or a time of great significance. It is a set time for a specific occasion. Used in this passage, it is referring to God's time; a particular occasion that God has set apart. This is very different from the way we talk about time in our daily lives. We ask when lunch is, what time should we see the movie, etc. Timekeeping is important in our culture, but God's time is not limited to our understanding of hours, days, and years. We think about God's time in light of our eternal salvation and the infinite love God has had for the world since the moment of creation.

► What does *kairos* mean for us today, and how do we respond to the coming of God's Kingdom?

► How do we respond to God's call with our whole hearts and minds?

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 120.

Jesus' coming to earth began a unique and meaningful time of fulfillment that Israel had never witnessed.

Jesus called his Apostles to follow him.
We too are called to follow the Lord.

As we mature in the faith, following Jesus results in a change in our hearts. We are ultimately changed and transformed in him.

Act on the Word

Cultivating Kairos

You will need to reserve a time in your parish church during your group's meeting time.

This is a three-part activity.

First, remind the young people of what *kairos* means (refer to the Reflect on the Word section from today's session). Help them to go deeper into this concept by leading them in a discussion about what it means to spend time with God; how we see, experience, and understand *kairos* in our time with Jesus. Address topics such as how people feel when they pray, expectations we might have of our prayer time, how we listen to God, and how we talk to God.

Then move the group to the parish church. Have the young people spread out throughout the nave, so that each person has their own prayer space. You might want to give the students a copy of today's Gospel reading to reflect on during this prayer time. Plan to spend about five to ten minutes in silence, allowing the teens time to talk with God and listen to his response.

Finally, have the young people come back together and talk about how we are called to act on our faith. Prayer is not just about spending quiet time with God. It is about shaping our lives around what God calls us to do in our conversations with him. When we pray, God reveals more of himself to us. How do we respond to this? How do we show others that we have been called by God to live in a certain way? How do we bring God's time, *kairos*, to our world? Encourage the teens to plan a group service project that helps bring about the Kingdom of God.

Closing Prayer

Merciful God,
listen to the faithful prayer and praise of
your Church.

Open our ears so that we may hear the summons
of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Enflame our hearts with your Spirit so that we
may follow him without hesitation.

Help us to be disciples true.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

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. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.