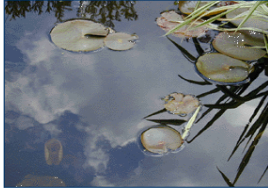


Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday, 24 January 2021



In England and Wales

Cycle of Prayer – Prayer for Christian Unity

Keynote: Jesus calls us, 'Repent – believe the Good News!'

Prophet Jonah 3:1-5,10

Jonah, at first, is a very reluctant and unwilling messenger, having been sent by God to the ancient city of Nineveh to call its people to change their greedy and evil ways. *'The word of the Lord was addressed a second time to Jonah: "Up! Go to Nineveh, the great city and preach to them as I told you to."* Jonah, we're told *'set out and went to Nineveh in obedience to the word of the Lord,'* and there the prophet calls on the people to turn to God. As a sign that they are repentant and will change their ways, the great and mighty, as well as the least in the city proclaim a fast, and wear garments of sackcloth. *'God saw their efforts to renounce their evil behaviour, and God relented.'* We are told, *'God did not inflict on them the disaster which had been threatened.'* There are two invitations we also might consider: to repent of our own bad ways, and to be witnesses to the holiness and integrity of the God who saves.

Responsorial Psalm 24 (25) – A song admitting guilt and asking for mercy

First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 7:29-31

We get so wrapped up in our worldly cares that Paul's advice might come to us just in time. For the moment of our death may come upon us suddenly without warning. *'Our time is growing short,'* says Paul, *'...those who are enjoying life should live as though there were nothing to laugh about; those whose life is buying things should live as though they had nothing of their own; those who have to deal with the world should not become engrossed in it. I say this,'* says the apostle, *'because the world as we know it is passing away.'*

For the Christian, belief is expected to change their way of life. Faith does make a difference to us both as individuals and as the 'faith community' – the Church. We have to make it happen!

Gospel according to Mark 1:14-20

The writer of this gospel, the evangelist Mark, from the very start gets straight to the point. *'Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. "The time has come," Jesus said, "and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the Good News."*

Are we listening? Amidst the busy cares and occupations of daily living we do need sometimes to draw aside and to listen to the voice of Jesus calling us. Beside the Sea of Galilee the fishermen busy with their fishing and their nets hear Jesus when he calls, and leaving their homes and occupations they become fishers throughout the known world. Taking with them the good news of liberation from sin and death and bringing the news of personal freedom. James and John the sons of Zebedee, we are told *'left their father in the boat with the men he employed, and they went after Jesus.'*

There are many ways in which we can answer our own call from God, we may not have to leave our loved ones – but to answer God's call, we must first listen: *'The time has come – Repent and believe the Good News.'*