



3rd Sunday Ord. Time, Yr B

Lectio Divina

Lectio: The readings to begin Ordinary Time Year B are completed and now until Lent we read continuously from the Gospel of St Mark. The beginning moment for Jesus is final moment of John the Baptist's ministry – his arrest. Jesus had been baptized by John the Baptist and endured forty days in the desert. He returns to his province of Galilee and there begins his ministry. The time of waiting and preparing is over; it is time for action (i.e. the opposite of being arrested). The new way of the kingdom of God is straight forward: **Repent, and believe the Good News.**¹ Jesus walks on. Jesus would have known the fishermen around Lake Galilee near where John had been baptizing and preaching. They were men gainfully engaged in the work of fishing. They were not people without a job or purposeless. From these fishermen Jesus calls his first disciples with the words: "*Follow me*". These fishermen will not be out of their depth but they will be taken to higher level – gathering men and women into the kingdom of God. But '*to follow*' means more than to trust that God will look after you. It also essentially calls for you to change your life in the pattern of the one you choose '*to follow*'. The first disciples Simon and Andrew, and then James and John, saw something in Jesus² and gave up their livelihoods and began their journey with Jesus. They were taking their first steps in learning the way of the Cross³.

Read: Mark 1: 14 - 20

Meditatio: Have I been arrested i.e. stopped by things beyond my control (e.g. the Pandemic)? What did I do in lockdown – did I grow in trust of God? Out of the desert Jesus went back to his home Province – am I getting back 'home'? How is God helping me to get back – am I experiencing a 'dark night of the soul'⁴? Do I feel an urge to tell of God's kingdom and the Good News? How can I strengthen the faith of those who are 'losing their faith' during these challenging times? What can I do now to help people and myself to re-think (i.e. repent) my relationship with Jesus? Do I believe that God is still with me and Jesus is my Saviour i.e. am I convinced of the Good News? As I 'walk along' what do I see; who do I see? Am I ready to speak of my faith to those I know? Am I 'locked in' to the kind of life that I am living now? What might Jesus be calling me to leave behind? Is my faith only a 'trusting in God'? How is my faith changing my life? Am I living 'the way of the Cross'?

Oratio: Pray for a deepening in hope. Pray for those who have lost sight of a favourable future. Pray for those unjustly arrested. Pray for openness to the truth. Pray for nations who use arrest to avoid facing challenging truths. Pray for fishermen and those who live off the land. Pray for a care of fisheries and agriculture. Pray for vocations. Pray that our faith may change our lives and be part of the coming of God's kingdom. Pray for the light of Christ to lead us out of these (dark) times. Pray for those who have lost their jobs because of the Pandemic. Pray for wisdom and courage for governments in facing challenging times, especially in USA. Pray for the coming of God's kingdom and the spread of the Good News. Pray for bishops and Church leaders.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer – Use any opportunity to tell of your faith and the hope of the Good News.

✍ Fr Joe

Mark 1: 14 - 20

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. ‘The time has come’ he said ‘and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the Good News.’

As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men.’ And at once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.

Notes:

1 These words are the words that will accompany the distribution of Ashes on Ash Wednesday.

2 Next Sunday’s Gospel will talk about Jesus attractiveness ‘*he taught them with authority*’ (Mk 1:22).

3 Mark’s Gospel is focused on the ‘Way of the Cross’.

4 St John of the Cross talks of this ‘Dark Night of the Soul’ i.e. a period in a Christian’s life when God seem absent. Many of the saints talk of a period like this in their life. They drew closer to God through remaining faithful through these times of challenge.