



Bible Study Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

St. Maria Goretti, St.
Augustine and St.
Peter Claver
Parishes
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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." Mk. 1:14-15 NABRE

Reading I: Jonah 3:1-5, 10

THIS IS YOUR SEASON! We all like to celebrate our accomplishments. Graduations, birthdays and wedding anniversaries are celebrated with the conviction that it is our time or our season for recognition. A season can be defined as one of the four divisions of the year. However, in biblical Palestine, there were two seasons, the dry season, which is hot and the wet session that is cool or cold. **Deut. 11:14**. The wisdom in the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is an appointed time for everything and a time for every affair under heaven. There is a time to plant, a time to uproot, a time to give birth and a time to die (**Ecc. 3:1-7**). This means that God has a cause and a purpose for everything. He provides a purpose and opportunity for us we meet the right person at the right time, or your health suddenly improves, and new opportunities are placed in our paths. There is a



Come, Follow Me!

reason and a season for every period of our lives. The readings for this Sunday speak of the season of discipleship. It is our time to choose to follow Christ more sincerely, more consistently and more prayerfully than ever before. This is your season to follow Him.

In the eighth century before Christ the season of repentance came to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria and the arch-enemy of Israel. The Book of Jonah is a sermon whose theme is that Yahweh is the God of all nations. The fact that the city was so large that it took three days to cross it is probably an exaggeration. But on the first day, Jonah preached its destruction (v. 4). When the people heard that their city would be destroyed, the season of transgression turned into a season of repentance and faith in Yahweh (v. 5). The sign of repentance was their clothes, sackcloth and ashes (vv. 7-8). Because of their repentance, God withheld their destruction. It was their season to receive God's grace and mercy. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** What season are you in currently? What is holding you back from perceiving God's grace and mercy?

NINEVEH

Nineveh was an ancient capital city of the Assyrian Empire, a place associated with the ministry of the prophet Jonah. The residents of this pagan city repented and turned to God after Jonah's preaching of a clear message of God's judgment (Jonah 3:5-10). Founded by Nimrod (Gen 10:8-10), Nineveh was the capital of the great Assyrian Empire for many years. Its fortunes rose and fell as Babylonia and Assyria struggled with each other for the dominant position in the ancient world. During some periods Babylonia was stronger, while the Assyrians gained the upper hand at other times.

In 612 B.C. Nineveh was destroyed, as prophesied by the Hebrew prophets, especially Nahum. Many scholars questioned the existence of Nineveh until its discovery by A.H. Layard and H. Rassam in 1845-1854. The site has now been excavated thoroughly. Occupational levels on the site go back to prehistoric times, before 3100 B.C. Some of the pottery indicates the city may have originated with the Sumerians. One of the exciting discoveries in this excavation was the great palace of the Assyrian King Sargon. Along with this find was a library of Cuneiform documents and many striking wall ornamentations. This clear evidence of Sargon's existence verifies the accuracy of the Book of Isaiah in the prophet's mention of this pagan king (Isa 20:1). (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Reading II: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

THIS IS YOUR SEASON! The role of St. Paul in these verses from 1 Corinthians are like that of Jonah in the first reading. Both speak of the proximity of God's judgment on the world. St. Paul probably believed that Jesus Christ would return to judge both the living and the dead during his lifetime. So, he could have concluded that the season of this earth was passing away.

These verses are extracts from St. Paul's advice to virgins and widows (v. 25). He encouraged them to remain in their present state because the season is changing. They all should to go about the ordinary activities of life in a way that is different from those who are not aware that this is a season of preparation. He announced that this world is passing away (v. 31). For St. Paul, the appointed time is the Messianic era. For us, it is a season of discipleship and a call to a deeper commitment to follow Christ. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What would you do if you were told that the world will end in three days?

Gospel: Mark 1:14-20

THIS IS YOUR SEASON! Have you ever felt that you know what you want to do and what you need to be doing? But for some reason, you are off doing something else. When this occurs, procrastination, has overpowered your ambition. When we escape into procrastination we miss the season or opportunity to be all God has intended us to be.

In Baptism we were given the grace and power of the Holy Spirit to do what is right. We are called daily to live our Baptism promises. In each season of our lives God provides opportunities for us to follow Him. Now is the time. Now is the season. It is your season for a deeper commitment to following the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In both the Gospel and the first reading there is a call to a season of repentance. Mark's Gospel abruptly enters into the public life of Jesus. He assumes that his readers already know the facts of Jesus' human origin and divinity. John's arrest (v. 14) signals the end of his role and the beginning of Jesus' ministry. John's season was over. Jesus' season began. Jesus preached that all should repent. That is, to go from a sinful life to one of holiness. He also preached that one must believe the message of salvation brought by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is what is meant by the "time of fulfillment." It means that God's promise of redemption is fulfilled in the saving work of Jesus (v. 15). All of us should enter into a season of repentance and faith in the good news of God's faithfulness (Neh. 1:9, Isa 44:22).

The call of the first disciples ends their season as simple fishermen and begins a season as disciples of Jesus Christ. Jesus called Simon and Andrew with authority, "follow me". He asked them to accept a complete rearrangement of their lifestyles and a new destiny (vv. 16-17). Jesus renames Simon as Peter and leader of the disciples (3:16, 8:29). The call of fishermen recalls the promise of God to send out "many fishermen" to gather the Israelites who were scattered among the nations (Jer 16:14-16).

The call and response of James and John are similar to that of Peter and Andrew. Their response is immediate, their occupations and destiny must change. There is no procrastination. Since "the time of fulfillment" has come, there is no time to delay. Discipleship requires a change of season, a change of purpose and a change of destiny. This is Your Season! **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** What must you leave behind to fulfill God's purpose for you in your life? What do the words, "Our Daily Bread," mean in the Lord's Prayer?

Pray About It!

Monday

Read Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

Tuesday

Read Mark 1:14-20. What have you left behind to serve God?

Wednesday

Read Jonah 3:1-10. Does your lifestyle show that you have "put on Christ" in Baptism?

Thursday

Pray an Act of Contrition and conduct a prayerful examination of your conscience.

Friday

Attend Mass and receive the Eucharist.

**Why do we pray,
"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"?**

2828 "Give us": The trust of children who look to their Father for everything is beautiful. "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." He gives to all the living "their food in due season." Jesus teaches us this petition, because it glorifies our Father by acknowledging how good he is, beyond all goodness. (CCC 2778)

2830 "Our bread": The Father who gives us life cannot but give us the nourishment life requires—all appropriate goods and blessings, both material and spiritual. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus insists on the filial trust that cooperates with our Father's providence. He is not inviting us to idleness, but wants to relieve us from nagging worry and preoccupation. Such is the filial surrender of the children of God: (CCC 2633, 227)

Resources: The Gospel of Mark, The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Revised Standard Version Second Catholic Edition, Ignatius Press San Francisco CA, 2010; pp 66-67; 1 Corinthians, Catholic Study Bible, Ignatius Press 2010. San Francisco. CA. 2010, pp. 295; Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year B, 2015, Brian Schmisek, Diana Macalinal, and Jay Cromer. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 44-47; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-The-Sunday-Readings-Cycle-B>, Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M. Franciscan Herald Press 1971, pp 87-92; The Gospel of Mark, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture, Mary Healy, Baker Academic, © 2008, pp. 42-43.

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver, St. Augustine and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2018