

January 24, 2021
The Third Sunday after Epiphany, Year B
Jonah 3:1-25, 10, Psalm 62:6-14, I Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20

TURNING

Scripture tells us that when the foreigners of Nineveh heard Jonah's warning from God "they turned from their evil ways." Would that we, each and all, were so responsive to the Holy One in our day. In our gospel lesson Simon and Andrew, James and John turned from their livelihood, their fishing nets, to follow Jesus on the way, **immediately**, Mark tells us. What will it take for us to recognize our need here and now to turn, to live into *metanoia*, to turn from our consuming self-centeredness and turn toward kindness, compassion, and love, the way of God?



The apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians urges his readers to be prepared "for the present form of this world is passing away". He seemed to think that Christ's second coming was immediate; we, on the other hand, more than 2000 years later seem to think there's no hurry. I have a priest friend who prefaces

the final blessing in the Eucharistic liturgy with these words:

"Life is short,
and we have little time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us,
so be quick to love
and make haste to be kind."

That casts a different light on Paul's words because the present form of our personal world is indeed passing away day by day, whether we are aware of it or not. Now is the time to turn.

These thoughts of turning bring to mind the Shaker song (Hymnal 1982, #554) we know as "Simple Gifts". Years ago, I led retreatants it in a simple circle dance where we physically turned on the last line: "to turn, turn, will be our delight till by turning, turning we come round right". You might try that for yourself to get in the mood to turn toward the Beloved today.

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