

***ctkAlive!* Scripture Study**
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
2021—B Cycle



Photo by AJG, taken at Santa Cruz Beach

For your convenience and to broaden your benefit from this and all sessions in this series, you will find links to books, authors, and other references mentioned in the text.

Caution: Links to the internet are like rabbits dashing across a hunter’s path. Instinct says, “Chase after that link!” Instead, we suggest waiting until you have followed the entire reflection. Then take all the time you wish to follow these interesting and educational links.

Exception: In the course of these reflections, you may have an opportunity to watch or listen to a relevant song or video.

Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.

Opening Prayer

Source: [Finding God in All Things](#): A Marquette Prayer Book, Marquette University.

“Soul of Christ” (“*Anima Christi*”) is a prayer of unknown authorship. It dates from the early 14th c. (AD/CE). St. [Ignatius of Loyola](#) (1491-1556) mentioned it in the first edition of his Spiritual Exercises. Later editions included the prayer’s full text.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be separated from you.
From the wicked foe, defend me.
At the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to you
that with your saints I may praise you
for ever and ever. Amen.

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Readings

Jonah 3: 1-5, 10 “Forty more days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.”

Psalm 25: 4-9 “Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths.”

First Corinthians 7: 29-31 “The world in its present form is passing away.”

Mark 1: 14-20 “This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand.”

A Reading from the Book of Jonah (3: 1-5, 10)

Invitation: Jonah is a short book. Take some time to read the entire story.

This reading describes what happened, after Jonah ran away from his prophetic calling. At sea, the crew of his escape vessel tossed him overboard. Then, a large fish swallowed him but later coughed him up on the shores of Nineveh, the kingdom of his original mission. The most common questions about this delightful book are: (1) Is Jonah a historical person? and (2) Did he really stay in the belly of a fish for three days?

Answer: The Book of Jonah is a work of fiction. The unknown prophetic author intended to underscore some basic truths his own contemporary Jewish readers had forgotten. This narrative chides the Jews of the time for their exclusive nationalism and forgetting that Yahweh loves peoples of all nations and tribes. The book ends with Jonah all alone, feeling alienated from Yahweh and miserable about the success of his own mission. (Wow!)

“The word of Yahweh came to Jonah a *second* time: ‘Go to Nineveh, the great city, and announce to them the message I give you.’

“In obedience to the word of Yahweh, Jonah went to Nineveh. It was a large city and took three days just to cross it. So Jonah walked a single day’s journey and began proclaiming, ‘Forty days more and Nineveh will be destroyed.’

“The people of the city believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

“When God saw what the Ninevites did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not carry out the destruction threatened upon them.”

Personal Reflection

The following questions challenge me to go deep inside myself.

— *When have I had a prayer answered and then complained . . . either it wasn’t enough or wasn’t the precise outcome I had prayed for?*

Responsorial: Psalm 25 (4-9)

Prayer for protection and forgiveness

Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Make known to me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and instruct me,
for you are my God, my savior;
I hope in you all day long.

Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Remember your compassion, O Yahweh,
your unfailing love from of old.
Remember not the sins of my youth,
but in your love remember me.

Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Good and upright, Yahweh teaches sinners his way.
He teaches the humble of heart
and guides them in what is right.

Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Personal Reflection

Most of us can empathize with David, the psalmist. God is our teacher. Our Loving Guide goes in front of us. We watch and follow. At times, God turns around to see if we are indeed following (as in today's gospel reading). This psalm provides a sort of 'act of contrition,' without stirring up *emotional* penitence. The verses state my case, admit my guilt, and present my plea for mercy.

— *What sins of my youth still "haunt" me today? Can I name them? Why can't I forgive myself since the Crucified Christ has forgiven me (again and again)?*

— *In what ways do I declare with David, "I hope in you all day long"?
If hope in God's love isn't part of my daily experience, what can I pinpoint as the cause?
What action might I commit to TODAY for building genuine hope into my everyday life?*

From the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (7: 29-31)

"I say this, brothers and sisters, time is running out, and those who are married must live as if not married; those who weep as if not weeping; those who are happy as if they were not happy; those buying something as if they had not bought it, and

those enjoying the present life as if they were not enjoying it. For the order of this world is vanishing.”

Personal Reflection

“Sounds pretty grim.” “Takes the fun out of life.” These might be our initial reactions to St. Paul’s advice. In this passage, we get a peek into the early Christian belief that our planet would not last much longer: “Time is running out,” Paul writes. He knew what daily life involved for his new converts. Everyone among his early Christian community in the Greek city of Corinth had troubles of one sort or another—as we do today. Paul didn’t have all the answers for how singles and married couples ought to live. He did know *one* thing from personal experience: relationship with Jesus is our surest source of the emotional and spiritual calm we crave for, as we anticipate death and, at some point, his Second coming.

— *When anxious/worried about life in general or some specific or perceived outcome, where do I find the inner calm I need to make wise decisions or do some “attitude adjusting”?*

— *How have I changed the way I deal with anxiety/worry since my “covid journey” began last March? If I worry or am more anxious than usual, what can I do today to calm down and “go with the flow” of what Jesus is asking me to deal with?*

— *How much do I trust my Lord to always have my best interests at heart, no matter the current circumstances of my life?*

Proclamation from the Gospel according to Mark (1: 14-20)



“After John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee and began preaching the Good News of God. He said, ‘The time has come; the kingdom of God is at hand. Change your ways and believe the Good News.’

“As Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake 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 fish for people.’

“At once, they abandoned their nets and followed him.

“Jesus went a little farther on, and saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee; they were in their boat mending their nets. Immediately, Jesus called them and they followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men.”

(Photo courtesy of [Cassiano Psomas](#) on [unsplash.com](#).)

Personal Reflection

Simon, Andrew, James, and John . . . Jesus already knew them, having met them where John the Baptist preached and baptized. These lake fishermen became the

nucleus of Jesus' disciples. As young men in the prime of life, their hearts responded to a call to make a new, countercultural commitment at a time when family ties held top priority in people's life decisions. Like Jonah in the first reading, they had no idea what lay ahead. Unlike Jonah, they trusted Jesus to show them the way. For them this constituted a new, bold, and unpredictable beginning of their lives as faithful Jews.

Many of us grew up in a time when *vocation* meant exclusively a call to priesthood or religious life. Since the [Second Vatican Council](#) (1962-1965), that definition has broadened. We apply it to the gamut of Christian life callings, including marriage and single life. Also to professions, such as teacher, medical professional, even _____ (fill in the blank).

— *What is my vocation in life today? To what other (temporary or life-long) vocations has God call me over the course of my life?*

— *How aware have I been that my faith-driven way of life constitutes my primary vocation? How willing am I to let Jesus be my companion on this topsy-turvy journey of my life?*

— *What draws me to welcome Jesus as my dearest friend?*

The Week Ahead

We have barely recovered from last week's failed insurrection against heart of our democratic republic. This week we witness the inauguration of our 46th president, Joseph Biden. How shocking it is to know that threats of violent insurrection still ring in the air! What feelings do I experience seeing Washington, D. C., take on the warlike appearance of a Middle Eastern warzone or what we call a "banana republic"?

Journaling Prompts

— *How did I spend the days (mentally and spiritually) leading up to the inauguration of our new president?*

— *How can I—yes, "li'l ol' me"—best serve my country in these tumultuous times?*

— *How have my feelings about my country's future shifted/changed, as we begin to reconstruct our national image and discourse?*

Take some time to record your feelings about what occurred prior to January 20 and since then.

For Inspirational Reading / Viewing

Video:

Bishop (then Father) [Robert Barron](#) comments on [the fishermen's call](#) to leave their nets and follow Jesus.

Music Video:

“[Rise and follow Me](#)” composed and sung by [Rhonda Vincent](#) with her band, the Rage.

Preview of Next Week's Scriptures

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy 18: 15-20 “Moses spoke to all the people, saying, ‘A prophet like me will the Lord your God raise up from among your own kin.’”

Psalms 95: 1-2, 6-9 “Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord.”

First Corinthians 7: 32-35 “I want you to be free of anxieties.”

Mark 1: 21-28 “The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority.”

Closing Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

A Prayer to Follow God's Calling

Source: [Crosswalk](#)



Jesus accomplished some of His greatest work through a group of men completely unqualified for their new calling. Though unequipped for their new role in the history of the world, they had the most important qualification. . . . They were *ready* and *willing*. Today, Jesus asks me to let him change the world through me.

Let us pray:

Jesus, I am humbled that you consider me worthy to be used—in ways big and small—to accomplish your will here on earth.

Help me respond without hesitation, whenever I perceive your voice calling me into action.

In your powerful and equipping name, I pray.

Amen.

Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to algarrotto@comcast.net

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