



“To Do...”

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year B

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

Gathering

(An unlit candle, a bible opened to this week's gospel and pieces of paper/pens, one for each member are arranged on a table covered with a green cloth.)

In this week's gospel we witness Peter, Andrew, James and John accept Jesus' invitation to leave their lives as they know them and follow him to become fishers of men. Jesus calls us as well to ever deeper relationship with him. Last week we reflected on the call to follow Jesus as it comes to us in the events of daily life. Name an event in which you sensed God's call this past week and say something about how you responded.

Prayer

(The leader distributes the pieces of paper and pens. The candle is lit and members pause to be attentive to the presence of God in their midst. After a couple of moments, he/she invites members to make a "To Do" list of several things they might do to respond more fully to Jesus in their lives.)

Leader: As we journey on our path through life, we want to serve

and please you Lord. In our quiet moments we desire to follow the plan you have outlined for our lives. We know you love us and want only what is best for us. Give us the strength and fortitude to respond more fully to your invitation to follow.

All: Blessed are they who accept Jesus' invitation to follow.

(Members join in singing, "You Have Called Us." (The song may be found on the Internet.)

HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.

When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. Pausing between them, the leader then poses these two questions: "What draws you to this gospel?" "Where do you resist this gospel?" The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After a time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)

Reflection

"Today's not a good day; I have too much to do. I'll get to it when I have more time." That is probably a thought that gets lots of play in each of our daily lives. Do you think Peter, Andrew, John and James might have had similar thoughts that day on the shore as they went about their typical, busy and task-filled day? How about Pope Francis? Reports suggest he was quite content being Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

When the Lord's invitation came, they each had the option to say, "Today's not a good day; maybe another day when I have more time."

But they said, "Yes." They answered an invitation that would substantially

change their lives. Were they hesitant, uncertain and even afraid of what might happen to their predictable and comfortable way of life? Probably.

Jesus invites all of us. The invitation is not *in the mail*. It has been *delivered*. Baptized into Christ and as a member of a small church community you have undoubtedly said “yes” to many invitations from the Lord. And yet, there may still be another invite that is sitting around unattended to. Maybe it is sitting in the *things to look at later* pile? Or maybe you’ve considered it, thought about it, prayed about it and all that is left to do is commit yourself to replying, “Yes”.

So, where are you in your response to Christ these days? Surely, replying with an ever deeper “Yes” to the Lord can be scary, but the invitation, in whatever form it presents itself, is basically an invitation to a deeper relationship with him. Amazing things happen to those who accept his invitations. Sometimes it can be quite challenging, but knowing one is helping to fulfill God’s plan for this world gives those who accept, the peace and joy only God can provide. You have said “yes” to God’s call in the past. What else is he asking of you now?

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ Something attracted Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow Jesus. What is it about Jesus that makes you want to follow him?
- ◆ How do you say yes to Jesus’ invitation(s) these days?
- ◆ What gets in your way of responding even more fully to Jesus?
- ◆ If you were interviewing for a discipleship position, what skill or characteristic would you highlight as one of your strengths and how would you use that trait in your role as a disciple?

HEARING THE GOSPEL’S LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: “What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?” “How are you/we being called to live in response to God’s word?” After a pause, the leader invites the community to a time of conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)

Response in Action Suggestions

- ◆ Set aside ten minutes each day this week for reflection and prayer. Focus on what Jesus is inviting you to do that day. Listen; discern how you might respond in action.
- ◆ Learn about the saints who said “yes” to the invitation to serve God. Set aside 5 minutes a day this week to go to Franciscan Media Productions Saint of the Day (<http://productions.franciscanmedia.org/>). Click on Programs and Features; then on Saint of the Day; then on the saint of the particular day. You can listen to the audio version or read the information.

Prayer

(After a brief pause, the gospel or a portion of it, either of the other readings as appropriate or the responsorial psalm are proclaimed. The idea is to select a text that lends itself to inviting members to the time of silent prayer that follows. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: “What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?” “What do you say to him in response?” The community pauses for a full five minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental selection may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two, or a brief expression that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally. The community receives this without additional comment.)

Following this sharing, members pause to think of one “To Do” faith-related item they will cross off their list this week. After a few moments, members share this one thing. Several members then pray as follows on behalf of all.)

I: I will not stumble
for your hand will guide
and in your footsteps I will tread.

II: I will not grow weary
for your spirit sustains
and my soul shall be renewed.

III: I will not be weak
for your truth strengthens
and no evil shall defeat me.

IV: From the depths of the earth
I shall soar upward
on wings like eagles.

V: I shall spread the news
throughout the world,
run the race against all odds,
and I shall prevail.

All: Amen.

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(The session concludes with the exchange of a sign of peace.)

