

Mark 1 14-20 3rd Sunday-B

In all three readings at today's Mass there is a sense of time running out. "Only forty more days..." shouted prophet Jonah in the 1st reading. "Our time is growing short," wrote St. Paul in the 2nd reading. "The time is fulfilled," said Jesus in the gospel. Everything in this world is transitory. We are not the first people in the world to think that everything is changing and that nothing remains the same. An ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, writing about 500 B.C., said, "Everything changes and nothing remains the same.... You cannot step twice in the same river, for the waters are perpetually flowing upon you...."

Since time is running out there are some issues too important to put off. A decision has to be made. I remember reading the letter of a young man to his friend; it said: "Dear Ann, I have got to decide between a new car and getting engaged. I really love this wonderful young lady. But every night when I go to sleep, I dream about the car." When we hear an invitation from Christ, we often find two conflicting inner voices within our spirit. One is telling us, look before you leap; don't get involved; you can always do it later on. Then there is a voice urging and encouraging us to trust and be obedient to the call. We can't have it both ways. We must respond to one voice or the other. We can't be indecisive between two opinions. The disciples were teachable; they were decisive.

I have come to the conclusion that there are basically four reasons why people do not catch fish: (1) Some people are using the wrong bait. (2) Some people are fishing in the wrong lake, that is, they don't know where the fish are. (3) Some people have got the right bait and they're in the right lake, but

they don't know how to fish. (4) Then there are some people who have the right bait, and they're in the right lake, and they know how to fish but they're just not going fishing. The Lord Jesus came not only that we might put our faith in Him, but that we might go fishing with Him. You see, our problem is not that we have the wrong lake. The water is full of fish. The problem is not that we have the wrong bait. We have the gospel which can hook any fish. Our problem, I believe, is one of ignorance and indifference. There are many Christians who believe they do not know how to share the Lord Jesus, and then there are many who just don't want to go. (Rev. Maxie Dunnam)

When we can have the greatest renewal: A few years ago Richard Cardinal Cushing wrote: "If all the sleeping folks will wake up, and all the lukewarm folks will fire up, and all the disgruntled folks will sweeten up, and all the discouraged folks will cheer up, and all the depressed folks will look up, and all the estranged folks will make up, and all the gossiping folks will shut up, and all the dry bones will shake up, and all the true soldiers will stand up, and all the church members will pray up, and if the Savior of all will be lifted up . . . then we can have the greatest renewal this world has ever known. Amen."

Jesus said time has fulfilled, repent and believe in the good news. What do you mean by good news? In the Roman Empire, the word for "good news" was used for official announcements. Jesus was officially announcing something about God's empire. So here good news means "the message of Jesus." It is the good news of salvation, the good news of God's grace, and the good news of peace.

To get that good news there is a condition; not one condition but a couple of conditions. Those conditions are repentance, forgiveness, justice, and rescue for the poor (Luke 4:18)

What did Jesus expect people to do with his message? Of course! Any speaker wants people to believe the message. But Jesus wants more than a simple acceptance of what He said. —he wants them to believe that it is good! He wants them to receive it with joy.

So if you want to enjoy the good news of Jesus, you need to repent, forgive, you need to practice justice and work for the rescue of the poor. To enjoy the good news of Jesus, let us repent, let us forgive others and seek forgiveness from God and brothers, and let us practice justice and work for the rescue of the poor.

Jesus didn't tell anyone to repent later. He told them to repent right away. So let us do it today!