

**The Call of the Disciples: “Fishers of Men”  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B)**

**Jonah 3:1-5, 10—Jonah’s Mission to Nineveh**

1. Mission: “Arise, go to Nineveh... and proclaim to it the message” (3:1)
2. Repentance: “proclaimed a fast, on sackcloth, from greatest to least...” (3:5)
3. Can God “Repent” of “Evil”? (Jon 3:10; cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*)
  - a. “Repent” = turn away/change
  - b. “Evil” = “misery, distress, injury” or “suffering” (Heb *ra’ah*)

**Psalm 25—Teach Me Your Ways, O Lord**

1. Imitation of God: “Make me know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths” (v. 4)
2. Teaching: “Lead me in your truth, and teach me...” (v. 5)

**1 Corinthians 7:29-31—The Form of this World is Passing Away**

1. Detachment: “live” in a way that is *detached* from “the world” (7:31)
2. Why? Because “the form” of “this world” is “passing away” (7:31)

**Mark 1:14-20—“I Will Make You Fishers of Men”**

1. What is the “good news”? (Mark 1:14-15)
  - a. “*The time is fulfilled*” = 490 Years to Coming of Messiah (cf. Dan 9:24-27)
  - b. “*The kingdom of God is at hand*” (cf. Dan 2:44-45)
2. The Call of the First Disciples (Mark 1:16-20)
  - a. Simon and Andrew: brothers and fishermen
  - b. Invitation: “Follow me”
  - c. Vocation: “I will make you *fishers of men*”
  - d. James and John: fishermen, brothers, sons of “Zebedee” (cf. “servants”)
  - e. OT Background: Jeremiah’s prophecy of “fishers” (Jer 16:14-16)

**The Living Tradition**

Thomas Aquinas: It seems that the Will of God is changeable. For the Lord says, “I repent that I have made man” (Gen 6:7)... *On the contrary*, It is said: *God is not as a man, that He should lie, nor as the son of man, that He should be changed* (Num. 23:19) ... These words of the Lord are to be understood metaphorically, and according to the likeness of our nature. For when we repent, we destroy what we have made; although we may even do so without change of will; as, when a man wills to make a thing, at the same time intending to destroy it later. Therefore God is said to have repented, by way of comparison with our mode of acting... (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I. 19. 7)

Origen of Alexandria: We may see... how that religion itself grew up in a short time... this result is the more surprising, that even the teachers of it themselves neither were men of skill, nor very numerous; and yet these words are preached throughout the whole

world, so that Greeks and Barbarians, wise and foolish, adopt the doctrines of the Christian religion. From which it is no doubtful inference, that it is not by human power or might that the words of Jesus Christ come to prevail with all faith and power over the understandings and souls of all men. (Origen, *On First Principles* 4.1.2; trans. ANF)

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. Reread the book of Jonah (it's very short!) What was the sin of the people of Nineveh? Why was he calling them to repentance?

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2. What book of the Old Testament was Jesus alluding to when he spoke of the “time” being fulfilled and the “kingdom” being at hand?

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3 Why did Jesus choose fishermen to be his first apostles? What qualities might a fisherman have that would be good for apostolic/missionary work?

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### For Further Study

1. Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: Volume 1*. New York: Doubleday, 2007. An excellent discussion by Pope Benedict XVI on Jesus' call of the Twelve disciples (pp. 169-182).
2. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q. 19, Article 17: Thomas Aquinas gives an excellent discussion of how to interpret biblical passages that say that God “repents” or “changes his will.”