

Alleluia, alleluia! / The kingdom of God is near: / believe the Good News! / Alleluia!

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

*Repent, and believe the Good News.*

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake — for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men.' And at once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / B

24 JANUARY 2021

## FISHING FOR OPEN HEARTS

In many ways, the book of Jonah is a moral tale that aims to open closed minds and hearts to the possibility that all people can respond to God's word if they are given the opportunity to hear it. When he was first commissioned to go to Nineveh, Jonah fled because he resisted the invitation to see his traditional enemies in a more positive light. Jonah saw Nineveh as a lost city – a symbol of power, aggression, and domination. Having walked into the middle of this huge bustling city he learned that even his enemies hungered to hear God's living word, and could respond generously by amending their lives.

At first sight, Paul's advice to the Corinthians can seem to devalue daily life. Paul was asked to give his advice to a group of Christians who were not sure how they should balance the demands of daily life and their Christian commitment. They expected Jesus to return in the very near future. Time was a precious commodity and they wanted to live each day in a state of readiness. Imagine you had only days or months to live – how would you spend them so as to be ready to meet the Lord?

Peter and Andrew, James and John were going about their normal lives when suddenly Jesus was present among them, inviting them on a journey that would turn their world upside down. Their response, like that of the people of Nineveh, was immediate and generous. It would now be their role to cast the net of God's word into the world – fishing for open hearts.

## FIRST READING

Jonah 3: 1-5, 10

A reading from the prophet Jonah

*The people of Nineveh renounced their evil ways.*

The word of the Lord was addressed to Jonah: 'Up!' he said 'Go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach to them as I told you to.' Jonah set out and went to Nineveh in obedience to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was a city great beyond compare: it took three days to cross it. Jonah went on into the city, making a day's journey. He preached in these words, 'Only forty days more and Nineveh is going to be destroyed.' And the people of Nineveh believed in God; they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least.

God saw their efforts to renounce their evil behaviour. And God relented: he did not inflict on them the disaster which he had threatened.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 24: 4-9. R. v. 4

**R.** Teach me your ways, O Lord.

1. Lord, make me know your ways. / Lord, teach me your paths. / Make me walk in your truth, and teach me: / for you are God my saviour. **R.**

2. Remember your mercy, Lord, / and the love you have shown from of old. / In your love remember me, / because of your goodness, O Lord. **R.**

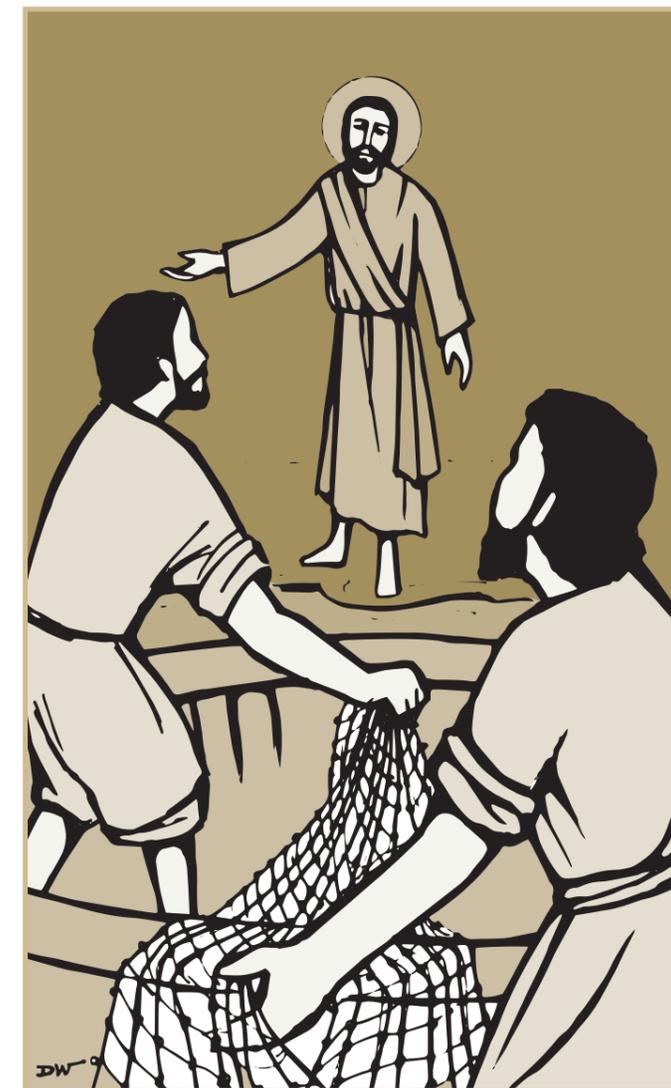
3. The Lord is good and upright. / He shows the path to those who stray, / he guides the humble in the right path; / he teaches his way to the poor. **R.**

## SECOND READING

1 Cor 7: 29-31

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

*The world as we know it is passing away.*



Brothers, our time is growing short. Those who have wives should live as though they had none, and those who mourn should live as though they had nothing to mourn for; those who are enjoying life should live as though there were nothing to laugh about; those whose life is buying things should live as though they had nothing of their own; and those who have to deal with the world should not become engrossed in it. I say this because the world as we know it is passing away.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

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