

## 24th January 2021 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Readings

Jonah 3: 1 – 5, 10

Psalms 62: 5 - 12

1 Corinthians 7: 29 - 31

Mark 1: 14 - 20



### Just come as you are?

From earliest days many of us will be familiar with this account of Jesus beginning his mission by calling his first disciples. It may have left us with a very simple picture of our Lord strolling along the beach in an ever-sunny Galilee, casually inviting four young fishermen to join him on a preaching tour! Hopefully, we have since learned that Jesus lived in a very real world of love and brutality, poverty and riches, beauty and destruction ... .. I wondered about comments in the town that evening. *'That young Jesus who's settled here with his aunt and uncle. There's talk of him being the Messiah! It's not going to be much of a revolution – in the hands of a joiner and four fishermen!* There may have been cynical laughter. They had seen it all before and the image of warrior fishing boats armed with carpentry tools was real comedy. They could not have known that forty years on, three of those men would have given their lives in the cause of Christ and the Kingdom of God – all as martyrs and two crucified like their leader. The fourth would be leading the Church at Ephesus and still heading up the spread of the Kingdom across the face of the earth.

Jesus' invitation – *Come as you are!* would not have been easy to accept. The four men had had time to consider its immediate implications. They were in business with busy markets to supply. What about their dependents? What about father Zebedee who would probably have been as fiery tempered as his sons are reported to have been. Maybe mother Salome would once again defend her boys (*ref Luke 9.51f*). It doesn't appear at that stage to have been a full-time commitment as we know they returned at times to the lake and their boats. The fact is they were ready to sign up to follow Jesus urgently. There was no agreed work-schedule but they already had an amazing faith in him.

That's how my thinking developed today. Jesus still calls us to follow him. That mostly implies being ready for the next urgent kingdom challenge. There will be many challenges to follow Christ in the next months as we emerge from the Covid19 pandemic. As it subsides we shall face temporary and permanent changes in both church and community. There will be a lot of *mopping up* to do. A lot of folks lives will have changed irreparably – unemployment and reduced incomes; opportunity for new life-changing turn abouts; increased injustices of poverty and undeserved hardship; scarcity of public monies for essential everyday services ..... Already we know mental health issues are increasing; family unity is under pressure; young people's lives have been scarred; education will have to be caught up with .....

For the praying Christian Jesus will be passing by with his invitation *Come with me and I will make you a Covid19 life-repairer. Times, conditions and rates of pay will be very uncertain but just come with me. Bring yourself and your love. This is a Kingdom Opportunity NOW Come as you are!*

### **A Post Pandemic Prayer**

Today's Psalm may easily be used as a contemporary prayer  
[Thinking of all who have suffered and served through the past year]

Lord, restore our confidence in you  
In our helplessness we depend on you alone;  
You have promised and proved to be our protector, saviour, provider.

Where there's a life-size blank screen ahead of us – we hope in you;  
When our whole world falls apart we reach out in faith,  
Telling you our troubles;  
Holding on to your secure safety rails;  
Feeling the warm in-flow of your love when everything else drains away.

Lord, Covid19 has been a great equaliser;  
Great or small, weak or strong, rich or poor,  
We are all depending on neighbourly support.  
Waiting on you for our next puff of breath  
We reach out to take your hand with confidence -  
We depend on you alone.

