

AMDG

3RD SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A, 22 JANUARY 2017

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.

First Reading

For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor – these you break as on the day of Midian. *First Reading*

I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be united again in your belief and practice.

Second Reading

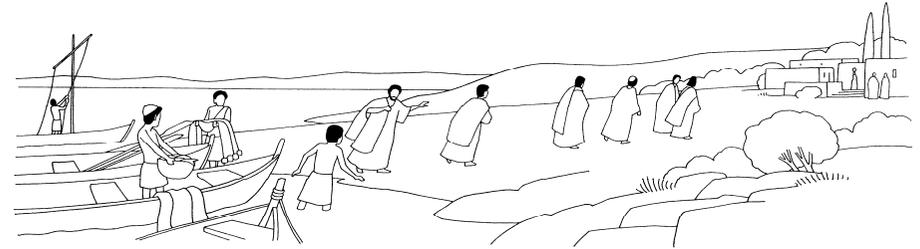
Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. *Gospel*

He went round the whole of Galilee teaching ... proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people.

Gospel

Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed. *Communion Antiphon*

'Be united and follow me.'



OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray pleading that our vision may overcome our weakness.

Almighty Father, the love you offer always exceeds the furthest expression of our human longing, for you are greater than the human heart.

Direct each thought, each effort of our life, so that the limits of our faults and weaknesses may not obscure the vision of your glory or keep us from the peace you have promised.

Today's readings are about two essential and related qualities of Christians: they are united in Jesus and they do what Jesus did – love people by spreading the Good News about the Kingdom of God and bringing them to wholeness.

I approach my prayer place, conscious of God's welcome; taking time to focus and relax in God's presence. I let the past week pass through my mind, noting the times when I felt at peace and at one with others. I try to feel the 'quality' of this peace/unity. How does it feel? I share this with God, grateful for the experience.

I reflect on our trouble-torn world, perhaps choosing one area that touches me, holding it – with God's loving and forgiving touch. I offer it to God and ask him, through the good people who are there, to show the path to unity and peace.

I pray as I am drawn.

**DOES THIS
IMAGE SPEAK TO
ME?**

**IS THERE
SOMEONE WITH
WHOM IT MIGHT
BE HELPFUL FOR
ME TO SHARE MY
REFLECTION?**



SECOND READING: I CORINTHIANS 1: 10–13, 17

I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. From what Chloe's people have been telling me, my dear brothers, it is clear that there are serious differences among you. What I mean are all these slogans that you have, like: 'I am for Paul,' 'I am for Apollos,' 'I am for Cephas,' 'I am for Christ.' Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul?

For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News, and not to preach that in the terms of philosophy in which the crucifixion of Christ cannot be expressed.

The factions in the reading were personality cults: Christians had lost sight of Jesus and were idolising teachers on the basis of their 'cleverness', and thus created disunity rather than the unity for which Jesus had lived and died – unity for all humankind. Their behaviour was a betrayal of Jesus.

Having settled in my place of prayer, I read the passage slowly, imagining the factions in Corinth and the horror that Paul experienced. I hear Paul's question, *Was it Paul that was crucified for you?* I listen to the question and let it sink in.

What does the question evoke in me? Perhaps a sense of false priorities in my life, or a sense of the extent of Jesus' love. I share it with Jesus.

I reflect on 'my' communities – family, work, neighbourhood, church. Where is there unity? What is its source/cause? I identify the source and thank God for it. Where is there disunity? I ask Jesus to show me its cause, and to grace me with strength to be a source of unity.

I close my prayer with an Our Father, asking God to grace us with God's unity.

THE GOSPEL MATTHEW 4: 12–23

Hearing that John had been arrested, Jesus went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled: *Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali! Way of the sea on the far side of the Jordan, Galilee of the nations! The people that lived in darkness has seen a great light; on those who dwell in the land of shadow of death a light has dawned.*

From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And they left their nets at once and followed him. Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. At once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him. He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people.

In Jesus' day there were divisions in the Jewish understanding of society – rich/poor, healthy/sick, good/sinner, Jew/Gentile etc. Only the first of each pair would inherit the kingdom. Yet there was hope for a universal Kingdom of God. Jesus acted on that hope and it became real!

I read the passage, imagining Jesus teaching, healing, creating a community where all are one in him. How might it feel as an orthodox Jew, and/or as an outcast who is welcomed?

I see Jesus calling the disciples – and me – to help him realise God's dream. What is he calling them, and me, to? What must they – and I – leave behind in order to respond to his call? Do Jesus and his call have priority over what I must leave behind?

What is my hope for the bit of the world that God has entrusted to me? I share this with Jesus and ask for what I need.