THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God,
you are ready to forgive us
whenever we do wrong.
Give us the courage
to be sorry for our faults
and so open up our hearts
to your love.
We ask you this
through Jesus, the Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The focus of our readings is twofold: the call of the prophet/disciple and the message to be proclaimed—repent and believe.

Jonah is called and sent. Our passage for today picks up the story after the call and tells us that Jonah was sent to preach repentance to the people of Ninevah. The heart of the story is the faith response of the people of Ninevah: when they heard God's message they did in fact believe and change their lives.

In our passage from Mark, the first disciples are called while at their ordinary work. They change their lives "immediately" and follow Jesus. And as we will hear on a later Sunday, they too are eventually sent out to preach the message Jesus gives in the opening verses of this Gospel, "Change your lives and believe in the Good News."

Those who are called must first repent and believe.

FIRST READING: Jonah 3:1-5,10

This is a reading from the book of Jonah. God spoke to Jonah and said,

"Go to the great city of Ninevah, and give them my message. I will tell you what to say to them."

So Jonah went to Ninevah just as God told him. Ninevah was a very big city. It was so big that it took three whole days to walk from one end of it to the other. Jonah started walking through the city, telling the people God's message. He said,

"In just forty days from now, the city of Ninevah will be destroyed."

The very first day
that Jonah gave this message,
all the people of Ninevah
believed God's message and they decided
that they would change their evil ways.
They showed this by fasting and doing penance.

God saw that they were truly sorry for all the evil they were doing and how they really had changed their lives. And so God did not destroy the city.

This is the Word of God.

RESPONSE: Psalm 25





GOSPEL: Mark 1:14-20

This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.

When Jesus came to Galilee, he proclaimed the Good News to the people saying,

"The time you have been waiting for has come! The reign of God is here! Change your lives and believe in the Good News!"

A little while later, as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were fishermen and they were putting their nets into the water. Jesus called out to them,

"Come and follow me.

From now on you will be gathering people, not fish!"

Simon and Andrew left their boats and their nets immediately and started to follow Jesus.

Later on, Jesus saw James and his brother John.
They were in their boat
taking care of their nets.
Jesus called to them and they too left their boat
and those who were working
in the boat with them.
And they went to follow Jesus.

This is the Good News of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

We suggest that the reflections be made only on the Gospel this Sunday. The first reading is a little difficult for children.

Note: If the children recall last
Sunday's Gospel reading, this could be a
bit confusing to them. The call of the
disciples here in Mark is quite different
from the account given last Sunday in the
Gospel of John. You may need to explain
(should it come up) that the two authors,
John and Mark, wrote separately, perhaps
with a time span of thirty to forty years.
Neither was interested in historical detail
as we consider it. Their point was simply
that the Lord calls. It is not of great
importance in what order or manner the
disciples were called.

Ask the children to recall the story. If they have difficulty recalling you may lead them with questions such as:

- What were Simon and Andrew doing when Jesus called them?
- · What did Jesus say to them?
- What other two disciples were called in this story?
- What did they do when Jesus called them?
- What does "gathering people" mean?

Spend time allowing children to share their thoughts on "change your lives and believe in the Good News."

What does it mean to follow Jesus today? (It is important that this be kept on their age level.)