

3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Jesus, in today's gospel reading, begins his public ministry by calling the people to repentance.

“From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

The Northern Galilee, where Jesus begins his ministry is the area referred to in the first reading as the place where people had walked in darkness. So Jesus has come to be the new light for them.

As the new light for them Jesus urges the people to change their situations in life, to change the direction of their life. He wants them to come to him who is their new light by adopting a new way of acting.

To continue to bring people to repentance, to the new light, Jesus calls the first four of his disciples. They are Simon Peter and his brother Andrew and James and his brother John.

When Jesus says to them, **“Come after me and I will make you fishers of men”**, we are told that they leave their nets and in the case of James and John their father and follow him. They make a radical decision to follow Jesus. Their response to the call is dramatic.

What I would like to bring to your attention about their response to the invitation to become disciples of Jesus is their openness to what Jesus is offering. They open themselves to the offer of Jesus. They are ready to change their situations in life; to allow Jesus to transform them into everything they can possibly be. In short, they allow the invitation of Jesus to change their lives in radical and wonderful ways.

The last part of the gospel reading says Jesus preaches, teaches and cures every disease and illness among the people. The point is Jesus makes the presence of the Kingdom of heaven felt in the lives of the suffering people.

Jesus continues to call us to a new light, to a new situation and a new direction. So like the disciples in the gospel reading let us continue to open ourselves to what he is offering. Let us continue to renew our commitment to our Christian vocation. Let us continue to make the presence of the kingdom of heaven felt in our communities by our lives of witness/service.

As we observe today as the Respect for Life or Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, in addition to our second collection to support the Respect for Life programs and activities in the Diocese, let continue to have respect for human life and work to promote the dignity of human life, by helping the weak and the less privileged in our communities to enjoy quality of life.

In short, let us always remember that as Christians we are called from certain situations in life and are called to help others.

St Paul in the second reading calls us to act like a community by being united in the same mind and in the same purpose. So as members of St Mary's Parish let continue to support the Parish to fulfill its goal for our salvation and to make the presence of the Kingdom of heaven felt in the community.