

Sunday 10th November 2024

The Third Sunday before Advent / Remembrance Sunday

Gospel Reading

Mark 1.14-20

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.’

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁶ As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’ ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Other Readings: Jonah 3.1-5,10 Psalm 62.5-12 Hebrews 9.24-28

Homily

Today, or any day, may not be a good day to mention politics in church. However, you may remember some forty years ago that Margaret Thatcher gave a speech at her party conference. As the people demanded a ‘u-turn’ on her government’s economic policies, she famously said to the gathering: ‘The lady’s not for turning!’

This memorable phrase speaks of a very human trait – that ‘turning’ is a bad move.

U-turns, changing our minds, turning round in our direction of travel: these are things we often prefer to avoid. We may find ourselves anxious about how turning or changing will impact our lives. Yet we might say that turning is at the very heart of our commemoration today.

On this Remembrance Sunday, we turn our minds to the World Wars of the previous century. We remember lives lost, lives changed forever, communities destroyed, as well as lives, communities and nations saved through the actions of others.

Having turned to face our past, we then turn to face our future. Today we reflect on the consequences of those past wars, and how they have shaped and will continue to shape the

world today. We look to the wars being fought here and now, and consider how the world will change in future conflicts.

Change and turning is at the heart of our faith. We encounter this call in our reading from Jonah. Jonah proclaims the word of the Lord to the city of Nineveh, and we hear that they 'believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth' and God saw that 'they turned from their evil ways.'

In today's gospel, Jesus calls his very first disciples and preaches a message of repentance. 'The kingdom of God has come near,' he says, 'Repent, and believe in the good news.'

To repent simply means to turn around. Jesus calls you and me, his followers, to turn our lives around, towards the kingdom: in our thoughts, our words, our deeds – in who we are and how we live our lives.

The gospel tells us that in hearing the good news of Jesus, people do turn to him. Simon and Andrew, James and John – they all hear the call of Jesus to follow him: their lives are changed as they lay down their nets and turn towards Jesus.

Jesus is calling us to turn our lives towards him, too. To hear the good news and to seek his kingdom. To turn around from what has gone before and look forward to what lies ahead.

This is a message the world needs to hear, especially at this Remembrance-tide. Today, may we hear the call of Jesus: to turn from hate to love; to turn from war to peace; to turn from death to new life.

Amen.

Conversation Questions

1. What does repentance mean in your understanding of faith?
2. What are the significant turning points in your own life and faith journey?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you?
What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*Almighty Father,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the King of all:*

*govern the hearts and minds of those in authority,
and bring the families of the nations,
divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin,
to be subject to his just and gentle rule;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

(or)

*God, our refuge and strength,
bring near the day when wars shall cease
and poverty and pain shall end,
that earth may know the peace of heaven
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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