

Homily. 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. B. 20/21 January 2024.

To understand what St. Paul is on about in the 2nd reading we need to know that he wrote his 1st Letter to the Corinthians thinking that the last days of this world were just around the corner. Paul alerts us to this when he says that the world as we know it is passing away. He believed that an entire new world system and way of living was very soon to be born.

In many ways Paul was correct. After the death and resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit a new world and way of living had indeed arrived, but Paul's timing was off. It took him a few more years to understand that the emergence of God's way would be a work with us, meaning that it's fullness and completion would be worked out in human history, in concert with us and according to God's timing, not Paul's.

There was an urgency in Jesus, too, as he commenced his public mission and ministry. We hear this in St. Mark's gospel when Jesus says; The time has come. The Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent now, and believe the Good News. We also notice this urgency when Jesus, walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, said to the two sets of fishermen and brothers; Follow me, and I will make you into fishers of other people. Simon and Andrew and then James and John responded instantly leaving everyone and all behind as they begin to walk in Jesus way and started learning from him.

That Jesus was inaugurating God's Kingdom and Reign over our world and in lives is beyond question. As time passed Jesus, like Paul after him, came to grasp that God's plan was to include all people and nations, the

whole world, and that God was calling us to be partners in the unfolding of God's great redemptive project. Jesus launched it and it can't be stopped. We though, in God's Holy Spirit, have a vital part to play in bringing God's Good News of salvation to the people of our time and to the ends of the earth. God hasn't chosen a 'from the top down approach' rather one 'from the bottom up' which involves us and those of every age.

This means is that while we're alive the urgency is real, for our own time is here is limited. I think of this as a cause for joy, an encouragement to us in following Jesus and giving our daily witness him. After all, who else today can do what we can do to help make Jesus Christ and his Good News of life, healing, justice, love and peace better known and received?

Truly, we don't know the future any better than did St. Paul. We keep on learning more about God's plan for us and for this world as we practice, live and deepen our faith. Now, though, is the time given to us, just like Jesus, Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John, Paul and countless others have had their day, their gifts to share and their service to offer.

As we embark on this year, listening and responding to the Lord's call, we always do so in company with each other, our Church. Being guided and inspired by Our Lord and his Good News heard in the scriptures, we now ask that God will direct our actions so that in the name of God's Beloved Son we will ever abound in good works in the days that lie ahead of us.