

Fr. Marcel's Bulletin Message for Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Today's gospel taken from Mark 1:14-20 tells us that "After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: 'This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'" Jesus came to Galilee to proclaim the good news of God. He went about spreading and preaching the good news to tax collectors and prostitutes, to lepers and the blind, to people who were insignificant like fishermen and to everybody. **Our God is a God of good news!** And his good news is this: In his Son Jesus Christ, sinners are forgiven, unrighteous people are made holy, blind people were made to see, lame people were able to walk, rejected people like lepers, tax collectors and prostitutes were cleansed, forgiven, restored and accepted. In Jesus, the insignificant people like fishermen were given important roles of proclaiming the good news. In Jesus, everyone is invited and everyone is welcomed to the feast of the Lamb.

Dearest beloved, we believe in the God of good news. We have a God who is always looking out for us. The good news of God can never be stopped by anything or by anybody. Even the arrest of John did not deter Jesus from spreading the good news. The good news excites and makes us happy. Therefore, nothing is going to deter us from receiving it and from spreading it. This good news is the good news of truth. Before Jesus came, human beings were guessing and groping who God is. But with the coming of Jesus, we have come to know that God is Abba, Father, and he loves and cares about us. The good news of God is the good news of hope. Because of life's dualism- happiness and sadness, dark and light, life and death etc. some people believe that human life and all human endeavors are meaningless. But the Lord's good news brings hope even in the face of extreme difficulties. God's good news is the good news of peace. It is the good news of promise. All non-Christian religions have an idea of a very demanding God. But our God is a God of good news who is more ready to give than we are to ask. The good news of Jesus is the good news of immortality and salvation. To pagans, death is the extinction and the destruction of life. To them, death ends life. But the good news of Jesus tells us that death is the beginning of the real life. Jesus tells us that we are on the way to life rather than death. The good news of Jesus is the good news of life.

Beloved in Christ, today's gospel says that as Jesus passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew fishing. And he said to them, "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men." They abandoned their profession, their fishing materials and probably their friends and family and followed him. As Jesus walked a little further, he also saw James, the Son of Zebedee, and his brother John. These two were fishing with their father. As soon as Jesus called them, they abandoned everything they were doing, left their father and the men who had been hired to help them out in their fishing business and followed him.

What is that thing that made Andrew, Peter, James and John leave everything and everybody behind and follow Jesus? What is this thing that makes people abandon everything to follow Jesus? It is called Good News! In Jesus Christ, we have God's good news for us. In Jesus, we have good news preached so that we might have life and have it more abundantly. In Jesus, we have the good news preached to us so that we might know the Lord and know who we are and where we are going. Sisters and brothers, in Jesus, we have God's good news. And God's good news today is: "Repent, and believe in the gospel." The good news is repent, make a U-turn, follow Jesus. Like Andrew, Peter, James and John, let's leave everything that will hinder our journey towards God behind and follow Jesus. Jesus is our Good News!

