

## Homily – 3rd Sunday Ordinary Time

I read a story about a boy who had just reached school age. In the early hours of the morning his mother woke him up and said, “It is time for you to begin school.” She added, “Would you prefer to begin today or tomorrow?” He took the second choice and responded, “Tomorrow.” I guess, he preferred to begin the following day because he was still enjoying the comfort of staying at home. To begin school was a call to a change of life and he was not ready to do that immediately. It was convenient for him to delay, defer or postpone this radical change in life.

It is not surprising that Jesus began his public ministry calling his listeners to urgent action. He preached with a loud voice saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1:15). Soon after preaching He began to call disciples. First, He called Simon and Andrew fishermen when they were casting a net in the sea. “And immediately, they left their nets and followed Him” These fishermen did not procrastinate, but saw the urgency of His message. They followed Him with instinctive alacrity.

Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh and gave them an ultimatum, a time frame to repent. He said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (Jonah 3:4). The people of Nineveh did not fall prey to procrastination, but with a sense of urgency they turned from their evil ways. Likewise, the Apostle Paul reminded the people of Corinth, “The appointed time is very short” (1 Corinthians 7:29). He meant there was no time for procrastination because procrastination is the thief of time. The Apostle knew well that attachment to material things and to relationships is among the factors that cause procrastination towards responding to God’s message. This is the reason why he admonished them, “Let those who have wives live as though they had none...and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away” (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:30-31). Simply put, the message of Paul is, do not cling to anything in the world, but develop a habit of detachment. I have mentioned this story before, but I will repeat it because it is important. Many years ago, I had a spiritual director who had the habit of giving something away every month. It was his way of practicing detachment.

When we look at our lives, we will observe that we are weighed down by the burden of an unhappy and wayward life. We seem to be like a people who are in the wrong bus, heading for the wrong destination. What is surprising is that we tend to cling to our old unhappy way of life. We are so entangled in our relationship to the world and to the glittering things the world offers. We prefer to delay the adoption of new, happier, deeper and authentic way of life that the Gospel message offers us.

What is more, the Gospel constantly speaks of Kairos, which is a Greek word for God’s appointed time. Kairos is God’s opportune moment, the right time. I read that the word is used

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86 times in the New Testament in different ways such as “At the appointed time,” “The hour has come..” etc. Jesus repeatedly speaks about the value of time and He says, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1:15). He calls us NOW to embrace the message of the Gospel with confident enthusiasm and hope.

Amen.