



Mark 1:14-20

14 After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. **15** 'The time has come,' he said, 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

16 As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake - for they were fishermen. **17** And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men.' **18** And at once they left their nets and followed him.

19 Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once **20** and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.

Other readings: Jonah 3:1-5,10 Psalm 24 (25) I Corinthians 7:29-31

This Sunday we begin our reading of the gospel laid down to be read on Ordinary Sundays this year, the Gospel according to Mark, the first and the shortest of the four gospels.

Mark begins his gospel without any reference to the birth or early life of Jesus. A short account of the ministry of John the Baptist is followed by the story of the baptism of Jesus and a brief reference to his temptation in the desert. Our passage begins with Jesus in Galilee proclaiming the 'good news' or 'gospel' of God. Jesus declares the coming of 'the time' and of 'the kingdom of God'. The essence of his preaching is that the time of fulfilment, the long-awaited time, has arrived. God's kingdom, God's rule, is coming. The power of evil and of sin will be challenged, and overcome. This will be the constant theme of the words and deeds of Jesus in Mark. The first half of the gospel is set mostly in the northern region of Galilee. It is here that the gospel is first heard and first welcomed.

Our reading continues with the call of the first disciples. They are taken away abruptly from their daily work of fishing. They respond immediately to Jesus' summons. They do not show the reluctance which Jonah showed (first reading). The call of Jesus is irresistible. We learn the names of the first four disciples, the brothers Simon and Andrew, and the brothers James and John. They abandon both their work, and their family ties. Something momentous is happening in their lives. It is amid the preoccupations of each day that the Lord calls his disciples, and calls them by name.

What was it like when you first understood and welcomed the message of the good news?

What has been your response to the call of Jesus at times of crisis or turning points in life?

We pray for a deeper appreciation that the good news of Jesus really is good news.

We pray for an understanding that only through God's goodness can our lives be free from worry and full of happiness.