

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Oct 10th 2016

Both readings take the faithful to a new level – a new covenant with Abraham in the Epistle and the fulfillment of Salvation History through Jesus Christ in the Gospel. Abraham will have descendants as numerous as the stars with his wife, Sarah. The story of Jonah who was lost for three days has a parallel in Christ's resurrection. The Psalms of the response and acclamation both make us aware of God's presence and call us to be part of that faithful. (In the process we need to recognize the changes in the cultural norms since the times when today's Epistle and Gospel were written.)

My sense is that many people are deep-rooted in their opinions. It was interesting listening in on conversations during the afternoon before the first presidential debate, here in the U.S. I heard many talk about how they did not want to watch the debate because it would only bother them. I heard this numerous times from supporters of both of the major candidates. I would like to say that I was not part of this group, but unfortunately I felt much the same way. It is hard to move forward when we are embedded where we are. In many contexts I recognize that I am one of those with the hardened heart mentioned in the Gospel Acclamation. I have a comfortable life and too often I am content ignoring the potential for change. Given Jesus' statements in today's Gospel, He was not going to let his audience be passively comfortable.

Jonah gave the people a message with a path to deliverance. This was a path that was based on adherence to rules. Jesus provides a new path to deliverance. Elsewhere He describes this as a path that goes beyond rules. This is a path that is not constrained by the law; rather, this is a path looking for the ways in which we can be of service. The great challenge that Jesus gives to us is a call to a willingness to love. We are asked to be caring and understanding. (I admit that I find it easier to view a number of people as difficult rather than lovable.) I believe that we have a God who is active in this world. I pray today for the attentiveness to be aware of God's presence and for the openness to participate in God's new creation.

Dear Lord,

I thank You for all that You oversee.

I am grateful for the role (that You share with us) in taking this creation to the next level.

I ask for Your assistance in being a partner in this project.

I ask for Your grace to listen even when it may not be what I want to hear.

I ask for Your help with patience where patience is needed.

I ask for Your call to action where action is needed.

In my moments of discontent and weakness, please help me to stay faithful.

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