

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Oct 17th 2017

Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop and Martyr

We hear, but we don't listen. Our eyes are open, but we don't see.

In the Gospel today, Jesus talks about Jonah and the Ninevites. Jonah went to Nineveh and preached a message of repentance. Everyone listened, from the lowliest to the king. They put on sackcloth and fasted and prayed for God's compassion. They heard the message. They listened. They were saved. Jesus says he is bringing that message to our generation. But do we listen? Do we see?

We have the best message of love, of understanding, of compassion that we could ever ask for, but we sometimes don't listen. Or we don't want to hear, so we cover our ears and hum so the words don't come through. Or we let the noise of our lives drown out what we really should be listening to – our hearts. I think oftentimes that's my biggest hurdle: I know what I should do, but I don't do it. I don't take time for prayer but watch cooking shows on TV. I avoid a sad co-worker because I am not in the mood. I laugh at someone else's expense.

I need to listen to my best self, to the message of God's love. Instead of the Ninevites' sackcloth, I can wear a veil of compassion. I can fast from the distractions that keep me from listening and seeing what's important around me. I need to see when others are hurting and can use a shoulder to cry on or someone to listen. My prayer today is to ask God to help me to listen and to see, to hear his word and see the goodness all around me.

Carol Zuegner -Creighton University's Journalism Department