

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jan 22nd 2012

REFLECTION Lectio Divina

Read

Mark 1:14-20: Jesus begins his mission of proclaiming God's kingdom. He calls his first disciples. They respond without hesitation.

Reflect:

The mission goes hand in hand with following Jesus. When we respond to the call to be discipleship we also accept the challenge of evangelization. It is not enough to claim that we follow Jesus if we do not preach the Good News of God's kingdom.

Pray:

Ask for the grace to have courage and confidence in witnessing to Jesus in our words and actions.

Act:

Share with someone how Jesus changed you and called you to follow him faithfully.

January 23

Monday

REFLECTION

Beelzebul was a god of the Canaanites (a people ejected from their land by the Jews of old). The name means 'Baal the Prince, so the Jews interpreted it contemptuously as meaning 'Prince of devils'. The form 'Beelzebub' which occurs in some versions is a further twist and it means 'Prince (or Lord) of the Flies'. The delegation from Jerusalem had no hesitation in identifying the Lord of Life with the Lord of the Flies. That is the sin against the Holy Spirit, to call good evil and evil good.

January 24

Tuesday

If indeed Jesus' family thought he was mad, then they belonged to those who "stood outside."

Belonging to the same family or race as Jesus, does not make one a disciple, but doing the will of God does. This was the passion of his life; anyone who was not part of that was not part of him. In the agony of Gethesemane he was able to say, "Not my will but yours be done." In him the passion to do the Father's will was deeper than death; it is not surprising then that it should also be deeper than birth and natural life.

January 25

Wednesday

Conversion of St. Paul

Converted only a few years after the death of Jesus, Paul became the leading Apostle of the new movement and played a decisive part in extending it beyond the limits of Judaism to become a worldwide religion. His surviving letters are the earliest extant Christian writings. They reveal both theological skill and pastoral understanding and have had lasting importance to Christian life and thought.

January 26

Thursday

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

Timothy was a co-author of many of the greatest Pauline letters. Titus was the first Christian of pagan birth to become a missionary. These two, though they did not know Jesus in the flesh and had pagan blood in their veins, spent their lives preaching the gospel. They must have listened avidly to stories and memories that others had of Jesus. They took to heart his challenge to "hear the word, take it to heart and produce."

January 27

Friday

Many years ago, experimental psychologists discovered that the autonomic systems in the body are not

so independent in their operation after all; they can be taught to do things! To have full control of everything that happens in you would be like having an airline pilot wave you to his seat at the controls, 39,000 feet up, and say, “It is all yours!: Thank God there are many things not subject to human will! The deeper one goes, the less subject. At the deepest level of all, the “Kingdom of God” (the Presence of God is a mystery that unfolds gradually, justly, innocently.....

January 28

Saturday

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

Thomas Aquinas

St. Therese of Lisieux had this experience for most of her short life, she tells us: “Jesus was asleep in my little boat” she says casually here and there. It did not dismay her; she wasn’t greedy for ‘high’ experiences; she accepted it completely. “I think he comes to me to rest,” she said, “other people give him no rest at all.” This is how she made sense of the intense spiritual darkness that she lived in, ‘the dark night of the soul.’ She has much to teach us who are impatient to lift ourselves up and ‘manage’ our spiritual lives.

January 29

Sunday

Read

Mark 1: 21-28: Jesus begins his ministry of healing. He has power over all evil and all unclean spirits.

Reflect:

If Jesus has power over all evil, especially physical evil, why is there so much suffering in our world? Is it all right to pray for physical healing? What if the healing does not take place? Are physical pain and suffering related to sin?

Pray:

Faithful followers can pray for anything they want. Praying for another’s physical healing helps that person, since it signifies love and concern.

Act:

Talk to someone who is ill. Visit a sick friend. Volunteer in a hospital.

January 30

Monday

The name of the demon, 'Legion' (or 'Mob'), could be used in Aramaic of either a single soldier or a detachment of 6,000. Did you ever feel that you and your life were fragmented into hundreds or thousands of pieces? The Greek word for the devil, diabolos, comes from dia (apart) and ballein (to throw). Fragmentation, disintegration, alienation: they are the devil's work. But by healing the man in this story, Jesus restored him to unity within himself and to unity with his family.

January 31

Tuesday

4th Week in Ordinary Time

Mark's gospel leaves an impression of breathless haste; it is like a child telling a story. Many sentences begin with "and"; he often uses phrases like "straight away," "and immediately"; he uses the 'historic present' (Jesus says to them, not said), which gives a feeling of urgency. The Old Testament took thousands of years to unfold, but the New Testament unfolded in just a couple of years. There is the urgency about the whole gospel that makes it quite clear it is not just for reading; it is for doing.

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