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January 23, 2021

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“The world in its present form is passing away” (1 Cor 7:31).

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Ps 25; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

The tradition of the “first 100 days” for a new political administration gives the public a marker it can use to determine success or failure. It also conveys an urgency, real or rhetorical, about what needs to be accomplished quickly. Leaders “hit the ground running,” knowing they can’t wait to act on pressing issues they were elected to solve.

Jesus must have felt this urgency when he heard that John the Baptist had been arrested and imprisoned by Herod. Jesus’ association with John and his baptism in the Jordan may have been factors in his decision to leave Judea and return north to Galilee. He has a mission to accomplish, and he won’t have much time before resistance builds and his enemies come after him. He proclaims, “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand.”

It is with this same urgency that Jesus rounds up his first followers, four fishermen plying their trade on the Sea of Galilee. We don’t know their previous encounters with Jesus, but as he walks along the shore, he sees them in their boats and calls out to them, “Come after me, and I will show you how to catch people!” All four abruptly abandon their boats, nets, families and futures to follow Jesus.

Typical of Mark’s Gospel, this one-paragraph description captures both the urgency and the energy of the start of Jesus’ public ministry. He and his disciples hit the ground running to preach the good news: The time of fulfillment has come. God’s

kingdom is at hand. Don't hesitate. Don't wait. Seize this opportunity to be part of something wonderful and daring.

In today's second reading, Paul tells the Corinthians that "the time is running out ... The world in its present form is passing away." He is not talking about the end, but the start of something utterly new, a new world, a new creation that will fulfill God's promises to make the world a kingdom of justice and love. It is not just of this world, but a transformation so deep it will make all things new, beginning in the hearts of those who hear the Good News, repent and respond totally to God's invitation.

The disciples' witness to us is this: Leave your old ways behind and begin anew. This thrilling account, like so much of the Gospel, seems like a dream, yet if we imagine ourselves along the shore, the feeling remains that maybe this is what is supposed to happen. Hear his voice, feel the Spirit breathing hope into you, then say "Yes."

One hundred days from today will be Monday, May 3, 2021. Circle that date on your calendar. What could happen by then if all of us trusted the graces God is offering us today?