

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time 2021

My beloved brothers and sisters, in our lives in the Lord, there are no coincidences! Every moment of time becomes an encounter with Christ in the many ways He is present to us and in the many people we meet along the way. The other day, I took Fr. Phil out to lunch after one of our morning Zoom meetings with the Diocese. After lunch, I went to the men's room, and I happened to meet one of the room attendants. I asked her about a strange looking device on her cart, and she told me it was an Ozone generator used for sanitizing rooms. She then asked me: "Are you Fr. Clark?" This began a conversation in which she told me that she wanted to come back to church after having been away a very long time. It filled my heart with such hope and joy!

In the readings and the Gospel for today, we learn about God's call to each of us: the call to a radical repentance and metanoia, the Greek word that means a radical change of heart, mind and behavior. It is amazing how this call starts. Many religions speak about mankind's search for God or for meaning in life; but, Christianity is about God's search for us! It starts with our Father seeking us, it doesn't start with us!

Nineveh was a huge city in the ancient Middle East. It was a fully pagan city seeking lives of pleasure and noise, commerce and sin. They were on the verge of self-destruction. God sends His prophet Jonah to call them to repentance, to a metanoia. They were pursuing selfishness as the road to their happiness; but, they were actually hurtling to their self-destruction. God's heart was moved to pity for them and sent Jonah to wake them up, and to turn back to the only path to true happiness which is found in God and His way, not our way! They listened and were converted! God went in search of them, because He loved them so deeply.

The same is true in the Gospel for today. Jesus, the Son of God, God in the flesh, came to earth calling us into a personal relationship with God. He calls these first disciples by name. They didn't introduce themselves to Him; He knew them by name, and calls them by name into a personal relationship by following Him and becoming His disciples! Notice, they were not saints! They were rough fishermen;

however, by His call, he calls them to become His saints, and gives them a greater meaning in their lives than just being fishermen, He gives them a purpose for life, and a cause way for happiness, and we call them the Blessed Peter, Andrew, James and John, etc. He wanted them to share in His Blessed Kingdom and He wants the same for us as well!

Did you know, that amongst all of the various demographics in this country and in Europe, Priests are the happiest. It is a fact substantiated by a number of scientific studies! Did you know, that religious and prayerful people who practice their faith are the most mentally healthy and happiest. It is a fact substantiated by science! Did you know that you have been uniquely created by God for His happiness? The very chance of your existence is 1 in $10^{2,685,000}$; that is a greater number than all of the stars in the galaxy, than any thing we can imagine. God created you uniquely to have a unique relationship with you, because the idea of you is so infinitely precious to Him. He is seeking you, all you have to do is run into His arms!