



Third Week in Ordinary Time: 24th and 25th January 2021

Reflection / Homily – Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Lord, make me know your ways”.

I must admit I like time to think before making life-changing decisions. Yet in St Mark’s account of the call of the first Disciples by Jesus in this Sunday’s Gospel the response is immediate. Of Simon and Andrew, we read “Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men.’ And, at once they left their nets and followed him.” Of James and John, “He called them at once and leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.”

Not only is the response immediate, it is also total, nothing else was more important.

When I look back to the call to priesthood, at the age of fifteen in my case, my response was immediate and total too. And, I thank God for it today: I have had a wonderful life in the footsteps of the “fishers of men”. I am sure you each have your own story of a significant moment in life when you heard Our Lord call you and you responded generously: maybe to married life, a commitment you have lived out before God; or coming into Full Communion with the Catholic Church at the time of celebrating your child’s First Holy Communion. It would be great to hear your story of God’s call to you and your response.

At this time, I feel the Church in the person of Jesus is making a new call to all of us on this Sunday of the Word of God. The question is how we are going to respond! On 30th September 2019 Pope Francis in a Document *“Aperuit Illis... He opened to them”*, which is taken from a section in St Luke’s Gospel describing the Road to Emmaus, where two disciples encounter the Risen Lord Jesus, and He starts to explain the Scriptures to them in the light of His Death and Resurrection. It was a precious moment when their eyes were opened to the full meaning of the Scriptures by Our Lord Himself. Afterwards, they said to each other “Did not our hearts burn within us?”

That is what opens up before us, the opportunity in the coming year to enter more deeply through prayer and reflection into the meaning of the Scriptures so that our journey in Faith may be richer and deeper.

Pope Francis had written that Document on the Feast of St Jerome, one of the great Doctors of the Church, who way back in the 300s had begun the translation of the Scriptures from the original languages into Latin. He is quoted in a great document of the 2nd Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, The Word of God, as saying “to be ignorant of the Scriptures is to be ignorant of Christ.”

This Sunday of the Word of God, Pope Francis will present bibles to 40 people from all different walks of life, at Mass in St Peter’s, emphasizing that the Scriptures are

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entrusted to everyone. Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, said recently “It is an initiative that the Pope has entrusted to the whole Church so that the Christian Community may concentrate on the great value that the Word of God occupies in its daily existence”.

I am sure, like me, you wish to respond generously to this call of Pope Francis. “This Sunday” Fisichella says “he wants to stimulate all Christians not just to place the Bible on the shelf as one of many books, perhaps filled with dust, but as an instrument that awakens our Faith”.

We said in the response to the Psalm at Mass “Lord make me know your ways.” At every Sunday Mass the Priest or Deacon reflects in the Homily on the Scriptures for that day, striving like Our Lord to open the Scriptures to his parishioners: what do they mean for life today, how might we respond to them, what did they mean at the time they were written. It is clear that in the Gospel of St Mark for the 3rd Sunday of the Year that the Disciples were generous and immediate in their response to God’s call to be “fishers of men”. So, let us set out today in Faith to respond generously, looking especially to the Church for its guidance in the Sunday Homily and in other initiatives to open the scriptures to us, so that our witness to the Faith, whatever our walk of life, may be richer and deeper.

Personally, I am planning a short Podcast related to daily Mass: I pray that will be a stimulus for you and for me in our witness to the Faith.

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