

## Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

By Fr. Demetrius R. Dumm O.S.B

### Gospel Summary

Today's gospel tells us that Jesus went to Galilee to begin his messianic ministry. We have become so accustomed to hearing this that we no longer notice how odd it was. Jerusalem was the religious and political center of Israel and anyone announcing a new future for Israel would have been expected to declare his intentions there. As Jesus' ministry develops, however, it becomes clear that Jerusalem was the one place in Israel that was least likely to accept his message. The powerful people in the capital city had far too much to protect. They could tolerate only a "controlled" reform.

Mark wasted no time in pointing out the implications of the public mission of Jesus in Galilee: "This is the time of fulfillment" (v.15). All the hopes and dreams of Israel are about to be realized. The thousand plus years of waiting are over. This is so because "The kingdom of God is at hand" (v.15). The hopes of Israel had been centered in the promised messianic kingdom through which God would deliver his people from bondage and bring everlasting peace. Now that Messiah has come.

But the kingdom that Jesus had in mind was both far less and far more than anyone in Israel had imagined—far less, because it would not mean the end of the hated Roman occupation; far more, because it would reveal a Messiah who would be the Son of God. Thus, as their small dreams were crushed, unimaginable divine dreams were being substituted. To nurture these dreams, Jesus would choose, not clever politicians, but simple honest fishermen. He knew that for his purposes a good

and generous heart was more important than a proud and ambitious head.

### Life Implications

We are painfully aware that, though 2000 years have passed, we have not yet seen the fulfillment of God's promises. The solution to this dilemma is the recognition that the fulfillment envisioned by Jesus is constantly being offered to us. It is a "rolling" fulfillment that each person must discover in his or her own lifetime. As such, it should be the primary project of our lives. Jesus has come, but he is also still coming, and each one of us must ask whether he is being welcomed. Fulfillment is offered; it is never imposed.

To live in the expectation of fulfillment is to live in the bittersweet world of promise. What we hope for is still awaited, and that is painful; but we also live in joyful expectation of what will be, and that is comforting beyond words. We may be struggling in a dark valley, but the horizon is illuminated by God's utterly trustworthy promise.

We note that Jesus called his first disciples from their workplaces. This is a reminder that there is a purpose in life beyond work and that this larger purpose is found in our response to God's call to walk with him. This means taking time for prayer and gradually getting to know the Lord as the very center of our lives. For we must come to know that it is in him alone that the value of our work and the precious gift of other people will be found again and enjoyed forever.

### READINGS OF THE WEEK

Job 3:1-10

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

January 22, 2012

# 靈 修 生 活

## 超 脫

黃 鳳 儀

「弟兄們，我給你們說：時限是短促的，今後有妻子的，要像沒有一樣；哭泣的，要像不哭泣的；歡樂的，要像不歡樂的；購買的，要像一無所得的；享用這世界的，要像不享用的，因為這世界的局面正在逝去。」(格前七 29-31)

保祿在格前七至十五章，似乎在答覆一些由信眾透過信件向他提出的問題(參看七 1)，所涉及的事項包括：有關婚姻生活及獨身生活的問題(七章)；有關吃祭邪神祭品的問題(八 1 ~ 十一 1)；有關信眾聚會、崇拜的問題(十一 2 ~ 十四 40)；有關基督徒復活的問題(十五章)。而這個主日的讀經二——格前七 29-31——就是屬於論及獨身、婚姻生活的章節。

在論及婚姻、獨身生活的過程中，保祿同時給團體訂下一道大原則：安於身份。每位基督徒都應安於蒙召的身份。這即是說，外邦人在受洗歸於基督時，不必接受割損；猶太人懷抱基督信仰時，亦不用再行什麼手術，以掩蓋已接受的割損。這個大原則可應用在自由人和奴隸的身上，亦可應用於已婚者和獨身者的身份上。因為所有基督徒都在基督內獲得再造，無分彼此地成為真正自由的人。現今，外在形式或身份對他們來說都不再有什麼價值，重要的是生活福音，在各自的崗位上，在天主召選的身份內，勉力滿全愛主愛人的誠命(參看七 17-28)。

各人要安於身份，看來還有另一因由。我們看到保祿繼而指出，基督快要再來，我們要為此作好準備。故此，我們沒有餘閒去料理一些次要的事，那些一度在生命中據佔一席位置的東西如掛慮、情感、享受、活動等，都應退下，讓人能為基督的再來作好準備。但這並不等於說，現狀應當轉變；相反的，現狀可維持，要轉變的乃是我對事物的態度，意識到首要的是與基督相遇。現世並非永恒，所以我們要放眼將來，不要被短暫而易逝的東西所影響、所牽累(參看七 29-31)。

「時間是短促的」，這句說話表達了宗徒對救恩進度的信念。保祿深信，隨著基督的救贖行動，人類已活於救恩史的最終階段，且不斷向著未來「基督的日子」邁進。基督隨時會再來，信眾因而要有所準備，正如主所教導的，以祈禱和醒寤的工夫迎向這未來的日子(參看得前五~2；瑪廿四 43~44)。除此以外，我們還須勉力擺脫世事的束縛，以超然的態度來看待事物；就算是有家室的，也要盡量從婚姻生活的焦慮中解放出來。

保祿在格前七 29~31 所說的，歷久常新，為任何時代的基督徒都合適。我們同樣地活在邁向圓滿救恩的途中，所以亦應有這種灑脫的精神，跳出任何規限我們的框框，以期能自由地與基督相遇。只是，我們少有此般超脫，並且很實在地為千萬事物而焦慮。我們或是不安於現況，或是對世物有無窮盡的追求，以致心力交瘁，活得累，活得不快樂。願保祿給予信眾的勸告亦能幫助我們振作，使我們能重新懷著輕鬆的心情，在自己固有的身份中，迎向未來。

摘自「公教報」

## 本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 二 年 一 月 廿 二 日

約 3: 1-10； 格前 7: 29-31； 谷 1: 14-20