

# Sunday, January 25, 2015

## Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

(Jonah 3:1-5,10; Psalm 25:4-9; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20)

### Hearing and Responding to God's Call to Evangelize

*Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men. (Mark 1:17)*

Fishing seems relatively easy, doesn't it? You throw a line into the water and hope a fish will bite the hook. But that simple notion undermines the skill necessary to be a true fisherman. When people pay thousands of dollars to enter national fishing contests, they aren't depending on simple luck. They're counting on the skills they have learned over a long period of time.

Similarly, when Jesus told Simon and Andrew and the others, "I will make you fishers of men," he meant that he wanted to teach them the art of evangelization (Mark 1:17). And that's what he wants to do with us as well. He wants to teach us how to reach people with the good news.

If you want to be a fisherman for Christ, you first have to know your "fish." You have to know that many of them have a hard time seeing the beauty of the gospel because they are distracted by so many other things. You have to know that sin may have hardened the hearts of some. But you also have to know that God's grace can penetrate the veil over any person's heart—as long as you, the fisherman, remain humble and open to his grace.

So here are three suggestions that will help make you into a vessel of grace: First, ask God to give you a desire to share his good news. Second, find the courage to ask people, even strangers, "Can I pray with you about anything?" You'd be surprised at how many people are open to a quiet, nonthreatening invitation. Third, invite people to join you at Mass. Offer to come and get them if they can't make it on their own. Take them out to breakfast afterward. Become a friend, and your love for Christ will rub off on them.

Three simple steps. Three simple ways to let the grace of the Holy Spirit work through you. So it isn't too hard to be a fisherman after all!

***"Lord Jesus, make me a vessel of your grace."***

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission. *The Word Among Us* Mass Edition contains all the Mass readings and prayers, and a meditation for each of the daily and Sunday Masses.)

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***Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion***

1. In the first reading, when the people of Nineveh heard Jonah's warning of God's impending judgment on their city, they believed the words and repented of their sins. Why do you think the Ninevites believed Jonah's message? (Hint: "*The word of the Lord came to Jonah...*" Jonah 3:1)
2. In the responsorial psalm, the psalmist prays and asks the Lord to guide him, make known to him, and teach him: "your ways," "your paths," and "your truth." One way for this to happen in each of our lives is to have a specific time each day when we pray and try to "listen" to the Lord? How important to you is it to have a daily time of prayer. What are some of the obstacles to this in your life and how can you overcome them?
3. How important to you is it to turn to the Lord during the day and ask him to guide you? What are some of the obstacles to this in your life and how can you overcome them?
4. St. Paul's words in the second reading (1 Corinthians 7:29-31) may seem harsh and impractical to us today. What message do you believe Paul was trying to convey in these words? In what ways can we apply the principle put forth in his message to our own lives today?
5. In the Gospel reading, Jesus, like Jonah in the first reading, preached a message of repentance. Unlike the people of Nineveh, many people rejected his message. Jesus pointed to this fact as well in Matthew 12:41: "*The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.*" Why do you think people would reject Jesus' message of repentance, but not Jonah's?
6. What did Jesus mean, in the Gospel reading, when he said to his disciples, "*Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men*" (Mark 1:17). In what ways do you believe that God has also called you to be his witness and be "fishers of men"? What are some obstacles that keep you from answering this call of evangelization?
7. In the meditation, we hear these words, "If you want to be a fisherman for Christ, you first have to know your 'fish.'" What do these words mean to you?
8. What steps, described in the meditation, are you willing to take now to share the good news with others?
9. Take some time now to pray and ask the Lord to give you a spirit of evangelism, ears to hear his voice, and the courage to say yes to his will and act on it. Use the prayer at the end of the meditation as the starting point.

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, a member of the NSC Council and a director of partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>), a ministry of **The Word Among Us** ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)) to the Military, Prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. Maurice was also the founding Executive Director of the **National Fellowship of Catholic Men** (<http://www.nfcmusa.org/>), for which he is currently a Trustee. He can be contacted at [mblumberg@wau.org](mailto:mblumberg@wau.org) or [mblumberg@aol.com](mailto:mblumberg@aol.com)].