

# Sunday Readings

## 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024

### Collect

Almighty ever-living God,  
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,  
that in the name of your beloved Son  
we may abound in good works.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the  
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.



### FIRST

A reading from the Book of Jonah

### READING

3:1-5, 10

The word of the Lord was addressed to Jonah: 'Up!' he said 'Go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach to them as I told you to.' Jonah set out and went to Nineveh in obedience to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was a city great beyond compare: it took three days to cross it. Jonah went on into the city, making a day's journey. He preached in these words, 'Only forty days more and Nineveh is going to be destroyed.' And the people of Nineveh believed in God; they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least.

God saw their efforts to renounce their evil behaviour. And God relented: he did not inflict on them the disaster which he had threatened.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

### Responsorial Psalm

*Psalm 24:4-9. R/. v.4.*

**R/. Lord, make me know your ways.**

Lord, make me know your ways.  
Lord, teach me your paths.  
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:  
for you are God my saviour. **R/.**

Remember your mercy, Lord,  
and the love you have shown from of old.  
In your love remember me.  
because of your goodness, O Lord. **R/.**

The Lord is good and upright.  
He shows the path to those who stray,  
He guides the humble in the right path,  
He teaches his way to the poor. **R/.**

### SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul  
to the Corinthians

7:29-31

Brothers: our time is growing short. Those who have wives should live as though they had none, and those who mourn should live as though they had nothing to mourn for; those who are enjoying life should live as though there were nothing to laugh about; those whose life is buying things should live as though they had nothing of their own; and those who have to deal with the world should not become engrossed in it. I say this because the world as we know it is passing away.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

### Gospel Acclamation

Mark 1:15

Alleluia, alleluia!

The kingdom of God is close at hand;  
believe the Good News.  
Alleluia!

### GOSPEL

Mark 1:14-20

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.  
*Glory to you, O Lord.*

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake – for they were fishermen. And 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.

Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*



# The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary Year B

## The Word of God

## Saint of the Week

Wednesday 24 January 2024

St Francis de Sales (1567 - 1622)

This Sunday, like last week, is characterised by two vocation stories through which both the personal invitation to conversion and the call to participate in the conversion of all humanity clearly emerges. The first reading is the story of Jonah. He is a prophet called by God to travel to the distant city of Ninevah to preach repentance to its inhabitants. Jonah was reluctant at first - he was convinced that it was useless to try and preach conversion to a city of pagans. He considered that only Israel could be the recipient of God's salvation. However, he went to that city and when he arrived he was forced to change his mind.

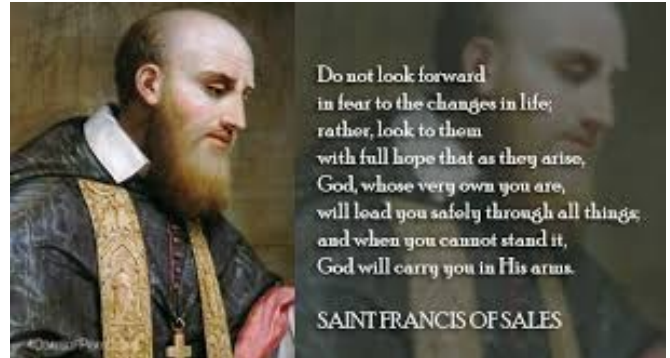
Unlike Jonah, the four fishermen called to become apostles in the Gospel respond quickly to the call of Jesus. But like Jonah, they too are called to trust the Lord to accomplish what, at first glance, seems illogical and dangerous: to leave their work behind and follow someone unknown. The Apostles' decision is undoubtedly determined by the words Jesus Himself proclaimed: *"The time has come and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News."*

The first two statements reveal the presence of God and the fulfilment of his work; the other two appeal to each individual who is called to collaborate in the design of salvation which is completed in Jesus of Nazareth who is Lord and Christ. The Word of God, therefore emphasises firstly that the vocation to the Christian life begins with a real personal conversion which can never be definitely completed and needs to be continually renewed at various times of our lives. Secondly, then, the human response should always be full of confidence, even when it seems that what God asks is not immediately understandable, logical or useful. Finally, every vocation must contain a missionary element that proclaims the 'call to conversion' that is often more effective when lived on a personal level.

## Prayer of the Week

### A Prayer of for the Unity of Christians

Lord, hear the prayers of your people and bring the hearts of believers together in your praise and in common sorrow for their sins. Heal all divisions among Christians, that we may rejoice in the perfect unity of your Church and move together as one to eternal life in your kingdom. Amen.



He was born near Annécy, in Savoy, studied the law, and was ordained to the priesthood despite the opposition of his father. His first mission was to re-evangelize the people of his home district (the Chablais), who had gone over to Calvinism. Always in danger of his life from hostile Calvinists, he preached with such effectiveness that after four years most of the people had returned to the Church. He was then appointed bishop of Geneva, and spent the rest of his life reforming and reorganising the diocese, and in caring for the souls of his people by preaching and spiritual guidance.

St Francis taught that we can all attain a devout and spiritual life, whatever our position in society: holiness is not reserved for monks and hermits alone. He wrote that "religious devotion does not destroy: it perfects," and his spiritual counsel is dedicated to making people more holy by making them more themselves. In his preaching against Calvinism he was driven by love rather than a desire to win: so much so, that it was a Calvinist minister who said "if we honoured anyone as a saint, I know of no-one since the days of the Apostles more worthy of it than this man."

St Francis is the patron saint of writers and journalists, who would do well to imitate his love and his moderation: as he said, "whoever wants to preach effectively must preach with love."

