

FEBRUARY 24, 2021  
Wednesday of the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Lent  
Luke 11: 29-32

“HOPEFUL TO CHANGE.”

We know that God uses people as messengers to convey His message to us. In the history of salvation, He uses prophets, kings, and even the lowly to know what He wants to wake His people up and change their lives. God’s messages are known to others through people, events, and daily experiences. Prophet Jonah was one these messengers who at first avoided God, but God pursued him and told him to convey the message of repentance to the people of Nineveh.

“Jonah begins to get the message that God means business and he reluctantly proceeds to go and preach to the people of Nineveh, a city synonymous with paganism and idolatry. He threatens the city with destruction if the people do not change their ways. “Only 40 days more and Nineveh will be overthrown.” The 40 days is reminiscent of the Flood, God’s punishment on a wicked world, which lasted 40 days or of the 40 years that the Israelites spent wandering in the desert. The Hebrew expression for ‘overthrown’ is also an echo of the ‘overthrowing’ of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by a special act of God. To Jonah’s great surprise there is an immediate response to his call for penance. “They believed in God”. From the greatest to the least, the citizens of Nineveh begin to fast and wear penitential sackcloth. Even the king “took off his robes, put on sackcloth and sat down in ashes”. Even animals were not to be given food. Inclusion of the domestic animals was unusual but expressed the urgency with which the Ninevites sought God’s mercy. The result was that God did indeed look kindly on their efforts to change their ways and relented. The threatened punishment for their wickedness was not inflicted. Clearly, repentant Gentiles were also the object of God’s love and forgiveness.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)

My brothers and sisters, Jonah's basic message is Hope. There is hope even to those people who are hard-headed, have a stubborn heart, and unrepentant. We must never lose hope to those people around us: your husband or wife who are irritating, children who don't go to church anymore, or colleagues who are impatient and don't like us in everything. Even if we feel hopeless in dealing with these people, don't stop loving them don't stop praying for them, don't stop understanding them. By this kind of attitude, two things will happen: they will change, or we are the one who will change, that is, we will be more compassionate, merciful, understanding and loving. If the Ninevites believed in God even if they were pagans and worship idols, there is always hope for all our loved ones whom we are praying for, we need just to do our part and the Lord will do the rest. If repentance is possible through prayers and kindness, we don't need to give up hope in our time. So, let us continue praying for your husband, wife, children that God may touch their hearts and come back to God. And we know, He will forgive us because in the first place He loves us so much, we just need to wear our sackcloth, bow down and cry mightily to God for mercy and forgiveness for all our sins and faults.