

MARCH 9, 2022
Wednesday of the 1st Week of Lent
Jonah 3: 1-10; Luke 11: 29-32

“REPENT AND BELIEVE.”

As we know, the Season of lent is a season of love and coming back to the Lord as we remember His great act of love. His ultimate act of love is His dying on the cross for our sake. We are saved but we need to cooperate to that grace of salvation by and through repentance and penance.

This is the call of Jonah to the people of Nineveh but before he can do that he must be ‘converted’ first. He avoided the call of God to go to Nineveh to preach repentance because he did not believe that they will heed and listen to his voice, and God showed mercy to wicked pagans. He avoided several times but to no avail, he found himself in the land of Nineveh. When he was asked to go to the east to preach to Ninevites, instead he took the ship to the west, the opposite direction. They encountered huge storm that threatens to sink the ship, the crew who realized that Jonah who disobeyed God the cause of their trouble, he was dumped overboard, swallowed by a whale and thrown him on the shore of Nineveh. This was the time Jonah realized that God wanted business from him: to preach repentance to Ninevites as he cried out, “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”¹ Forty days as we know means punishment like Noah’s experienced of the Great Flood, lasted forty days or the forty years Israelites’ wandering in the desert. After the people of Nineveh heard this, from the king, nobles, ordinary people and even animals fasted, wore sackcloth, and asked the Lord for forgiveness. When the Lord saw their repentant hearts, God forgave and spared them the punishment.

¹ Jonah 3: 4 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

In the gospel, Jesus used two images of Jonah and the repentant Ninevites, and the queen of the south who came from afar to hear the wisdom of Solomon to invite the people to repentance.

My dear brothers and sisters, “for us, at this time of Lent, it is a reminder of our need to repent, both in the sense of being truly sorry for all the wrong we have done and the good we have failed to do and to reflect on how our lives can be brought more in line with the call of the Gospel. It is also a time to reflect on our attitudes to non-Catholics and non-Christians or ex-Christians. Jesus himself says that we will be surprised at the number and kinds of people who will go before us in his Kingdom. Let us make sure that we will be among them. Lent is a time to make the right preparations.”² Let us therefore be prepared and may the Season of Lent be our way of preparation here on earth and in the next. As we are being reminded last Ash Wednesday while the ministers put ashes on our forehead: ‘Repent and believe the gospel’ may we repent and come back to the Lord NOW.

² livingspace.sacredspace.ie