

**Deacon Tony's Homily
for the
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

The world, as we know it, is passing away!

This is a fact that we must consider when we decide how we are to live our lives.

Most people down through the centuries, have to learn this through experience.

That's why Our Lord's message was to repent and believe the "Good News".

The "Good News" is that God knows and wants the best for His children.

As far back as Jonah's time, people were having to learn the hard way that God is in charge. Our first reading begins right after Jonah learned a good lesson. But we all know that he did not obey on the first calling. Yes, this is the same Jonah who was swallowed by a giant fish or whale. You see when God first called Jonah, he instructed him to travel to Nineveh to tell the people of Nineveh to repent. Well, the people of Nineveh had a frightful reputation for prophets. Jonah had such a fear, that he set out in the opposite direction to Tarshish, to avoid God's call. Tarshish was about 2500 miles away from Nineveh. God created a great storm on the sea that Jonah was traveling. The crew was aroused and began praying to their various God's and when they found Jonah in the lower part of the ship they demanded that he pray to his God. He had told them that he was fleeing his God so they threw him overboard and he was swallowed up by the whale. Well living inside of a whale for three days is enough to teach anyone a lesson.

I am sure that we too try to escape God's calling when it gets too tough.

We close our ears and hearts rather than seek His grace to overcome our fears.

That is where our first reading begins. Jonah went to preach to the evil city of Nineveh. Surprise, surprise they repented and everyone put on sackcloth as a sign of their repentance. God honored their repentance and relented on punishing them. For us today we see that with God all things are possible and that we should never give up on the conversion of anyone.

God's message remains the same: REPENT AND EMBRACE THE GOSPEL. This message must be heralded by all who call themselves Christians. Jesus needed others to proclaim it after He physically left this world. That is why He called His Apostles, who in turn established Our Lord's Church on earth, to be carried out by all who follow in the Apostolic tradition of our church today.

Let us pray that God will sharpen our awareness of the special call that carries a joyful spirit so that we are happy to live it out. It was not meant to be a burden but a joy that we are happy to bear along with our Lord and Savior, Jesus, to whom we owe so much.

May we gain strength and wisdom from our encounters with Jesus.