

A Reflection from Fr. Joseph

Today is the only time, in the Sunday lectionary three-year cycle, that we have a reading from the Book of Jonah. That is a shame because this book has a deep and relevant message for our lives. Some of you know that Jonah was the prophet who was swallowed by a whale. But that is not what the Book of Jonah is about. The Book of Jonah is about a disagreement, a standoff, between Jonah and God. The standoff concerns the Assyrians.

The Assyrians were a people of the ancient world, hated by all. They ruled a cruel empire and conquered many nations, treating them violently. Jonah certainly hated the Assyrians. He wanted them to be destroyed. He wanted them to suffer for their crimes. But here is where the disagreement of the Book of Jonah emerges. God did not want the Assyrians to be destroyed. God wanted them to change. This is why God sent Jonah to the Assyrians, to preach so that they would repent and become righteous people. Now, Jonah did not want to obey God's command. The last thing he wanted, was for the Assyrians to repent and thereby receive God's love and mercy. But God insists. In today's first reading, Jonah arrives at Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, and preaches. The entire city repents and is saved. This makes Jonah furious. He erupts in anger. He tells God he no longer will serve as his prophet, and he asks God to end his life.

Now the story of the Book of Jonah is told in a fanciful and extreme way, but its relevance to our lives is clear. There are times when you and I, like Jonah, find ourselves in a standoff with God about who deserves God's love and mercy.

You see, as we live our lives, we take sides. God does not. We consider people who agree with us to be intelligent and worthy of respect and those who disagree with us to be ignorant and to be ignored. But God does not ignore anyone. God loves everyone as a son or daughter. We believe that when someone does something wrong, they should be punished. But the Book of Jonah tells us that God is not looking for punishment. God is looking for an opportunity to show mercy. Therefore, we find ourselves at a standoff with God, because God is opposed to every expression of partisan thinking. God is against every example of glorified nationalism. God rejects every call for violent retribution. These are ways of thinking which you and I can be tempted to fall into.

But here is the good news of the Book of Jonah. Even if we do fall into partisan and vengeful thinking, God does not reject us. Throughout the whole story of Jonah, Jonah remains a nationalistic bigot, but God does not walk away from Jonah. God continues to guide Jonah, to talk to Jonah, and to care for Jonah. God will do the same for us. Even if we are unable to forgive, even if we are unwilling to consider another point of view, even if we are overcome with anger against our enemy, God does not give up on us. God keeps patiently calling for us to change.

Of course, in fact, there can be no standoff between God and us. Both the Bible and our faith tradition tell us that God is always right, and we must accept God's point of view. But God gives us time to reach that understanding. And until we attain God's perspective, God continues to walk by our side, loving us as daughters and sons.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mon. Jan. 22nd - 2 Samuel 5:1-7, 10; Mark 3:22-30

Tue. Jan. 23rd - 2 Samuel 6:12b-15, 17-19; Mark 3:31-35

Wed. Jan. 24th - ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, memorial
2 Samuel 7:1-17; Mark 4:1-20

Thurs. Jan. 25th - THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL
Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22; Mark 16:15-18

Fri. Jan. 26th - ST. TIMOTHY & ST. TITUS, memorial
2 Timothy 1:1-8 or Titus 1:1-15; Luke 10:1-9

Sat. Jan. 27th - 2 Samuel 12:1-7a, 10-17; Mark 4:35-41

Sun. Jan 28th - FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Deuteronomy 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 7:32-35; Mark 1:21-28

**ALTAR SERVERS**

Wed. Jan. 24th - 7:30 PM - Volunteers

Sat. Jan. 27th - 5:00 PM - K.Madoginog, C & C Tang, J.Tuguinay.

Sun. Jan. 28th - 9AM - E.Garrovillas, A & A Chan, A.Kolobova, S.Lee. **11AM** - M & T Nguyen, T. Nguyen, A & A Basbas, W.Pharm, W. Del Rosario.

5PM - C.Jaya, A.Velasquez, T.Ta, J.Paja, D.Dang, J.Cayabyab, Z.Bambilla.

**PARISH ENVELOPES FOR 2024**

Have you picked up your new sets of parish envelopes? They are arranged alphabetically. If you have recently requested a set, you will also find them there. Anyone wishing envelopes for 2024, is asked to call the parish office.

**FEAST OF STO. NINO
SUNDAY, JAN. 28TH AT 5 PM**

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR MASS AT 5 PM
FOLLOWED BY A PROCESSION. A
RECEPTION WILL BE HELD IN THE
SCHOOL GYM. ALL ARE WELCOME TO
ATTEND!**



IN MEMORIAM

a Memorial Service will be held for Mrs. Irene Richardson, a long time parishioner of St. Jude, on Thursday, Jan. 25th, at 11:30 am. May she and all the faithful departed rest in peace.

SCHOOL NEWS

- **School Mass:** Please join us this Wednesday at 9 am.
- **Noon Dismissal:** Friday, Jan. 26th.
- **No School:** Monday, Jan. 29th
- **St. Jude School Accepting new Applications**

We are now accepting new applications for the 2024-25 school year. If interested, please call the school office at 604-434-1633 for application form.

- **School tours:** Our Gr. 7 Student Ambassadors are available to provide tours of our school to prospective families. If you know of someone who might be interested in attending St. Jude School, please tell them to sign up for a tour. Any interested family can email registrar@stjude.ca to schedule a tour.

-Gr. 7 Fundraiser: Our gr. 7 students will be selling Nachos at the entrance of the church this weekend after all the Masses.



ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

Up-Coming Events

Stewardship Reflection

“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”
- Mark 1:17

Jesus’ call to “follow me” is a call to all Christians! The call is in the here and now, in our present circumstances, not when we think we are “ready” or have everything in order. Good stewardship of our God-given gifts means that things aren’t always going to go according to our schedule, but that God has a much better plan in store for each of us.

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Pro-Life Mass and Prayer Vigil

Join us for our monthly Mass and vigil to pray for respect for all human life, from conception to its natural end. Saturday, Feb. 3 at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Vancouver at 9:00 am.

Weekend Getaway Marriage Conference

We are excited to partner with Family Life Canada to offer weekend getaways to married couples in the Archdiocese of Vancouver! The Weekend Getaway is a marriage conference uniquely designed to enrich your relationship. For most couples, it’s a chance to reconnect, re-establish the foundation, and rekindle romance. For others, it’s a fresh start. For some, it will be the weekend that saves a marriage. The next getaway is on the weekend of Feb. 16-18, 2024 at the Fairmont Empress in Victoria. For info: beholdvancouver.org/events

Spiritual Care Training Program

Pope Francis has challenged everyone to think about their brothers and sisters in a new way as many are experiencing profound loneliness and isolation. The Archdiocese of Vancouver is offering the Spiritual Care Training Program as one way to answer this call.

The eight-week course teaches how to make yourself more available to seniors and others who can benefit from your genuine concern and presence in their lives. Some topics covered include aging, communication, boundaries and self-care. The training is offered online via Zoom every Thursday, from February 1 to March 21, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Cost is \$30. Learn more and register at beholdvancouver.org/events

Be a Vendor at the 2024 Catholic Educators Conference

Be a part of something truly special and grand. Register as a vendor at our 2024 Catholic Educators' Conference. This year's conference is on Thursday, February 24, 2024 at the Vancouver Trade & Convention Centre. Register online at cisva.regfox.com/cec2024

The Great Divorce: A Book Study for Young Adults

The Great Divorce by C.S. Lewis is the story of the journey of a man taking a bus ride from Hell to Heaven. Along the way, he follows several people who, upon arriving in Heaven, meet people and situations from their past lives.

Young adults aged 19-35 are welcome to a book study with the Religious Sisters of the Archdiocese. The next meeting is on Friday, Feb. 9 at 6:00 pm until 8:30 pm at the Vanspec Centre (2811 Venables Street, Vancouver). This is a great opportunity to connect with other young adults and the Religious Sisters of the Archdiocese in a discussion setting. It also offers a chance to go deeper in overcoming the struggles of living a Christian life in the modern world. Learn more and register online at beholdvancouver.org/events

Seminary of Christ the King

There will be a Vocation Live-In Feb 10 -11 at the Seminary of Christ the King in Mission, BC. Anyone wishing to enter the Seminary in the next couple of years is welcome. For more information phone 604-826-8975 or email rector.minors@sck.ca