

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

THEME: **EVANGELIZATION -TIME TO BEGIN**

Today's Gospel reading is on Jesus beginning his public ministry. After living a private life for thirty years, how did Jesus know exactly when to end the private life and begin his public ministry? Our first thoughts are to suppose that, of course, God his father spoke to him and communicated to him exactly when to begin. He got a special green light from God. But today's Gospel passage suggests that Jesus probably arrived at this decision the way most people do, that is by judging from the things happening in their lives, what God is trying to say to them.

According to today's Gospel passage, when Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea. Jesus hears that John has been arrested. He figures out that the renewal movement that John started would be in need of a leader. He looks around and finds that none is more qualified to assume the leadership of the movement than he himself. That's it. That is all the sign he needed. He says farewell to his family and moves on to meet the challenges of his public calling. Unlike some of us, Jesus did not sit there and wait for a special supernatural sign from above. Rather, Jesus read the "signs of the times," that is, to judge from what was happening around him, what God might be saying to him.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, what signs do we see in the world around us? Do you for example, see the need for more messengers of God's love and peace in our world today? What can you personally do about it, given the personal circumstances of your life? When are you actually going to start doing something about it, or are you among those waiting for a special sign from God? Well, that sign may never come. We like Jesus, must learn to read the "signs of the times" in which we live.

Note that Jesus did not start preaching immediately. If he had started preaching right away from his hometown in Nazareth, they would probably have silenced him there and then. The first thing he did was to look for a location and a community that would support his ministry. He found it in Capernaum where he quickly attracted a group of friends and disciples. Even though he is the son of God, Jesus did not work like a lone ranger. He shared his vision and his ministry with people. That is why, even though he was stopped and killed just three years later, they could not stop his work and his vision for a new world of sisters and brothers. In Jesus we see not only what it means to do God's work but also how to do God's work.

Let us ask God today to give us the wisdom to read the "signs" of our own times, so that we can correctly judge from events in the world around us, what demands God is making of us as individuals and as a parish. And let us ask for the courage to start doing it, not just praying about it.

