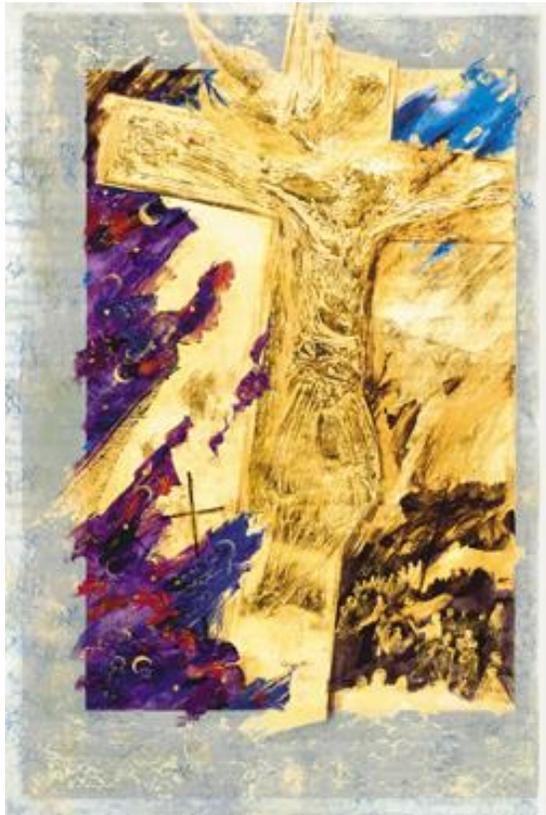


# *Lenten Reflections*

*March 13, 2019*



Here is a brief story of Jonah. When God called Jonah to preach to Nineveh, the prophet refused and ran away. God then used a whale to take Jonah to the land he was supposed to call to repentance. The mission continued, but not without Jonah's objections. When Jonah left Nineveh, he sat down under a small bush to get some rest. At the same time, a worm came and destroyed the bush's root. The bush dried up and Jonah blamed God for that, as well as for all the other unfortunate circumstances in his life, screaming out loud in the desert, "Why did you send me? Why did you let a worm to destroy the bush I was resting under? Why did you let the whale to swallow me? Why me? Why preaching? Why Nineveh?"

Judging from my own perspective, the Almighty might have lost patience ten times already. I would not be so patient with students who argue with me about every single task they need to do, every assignment or grade I give, or the extra four minutes I keep them in class to finish my lecture. Yet, we read today that God patiently spoke to Jonah for the second time.

Let the word invite us today to reflect upon the grace of the second chance. There is always time for a new beginning, starting afresh, picking ourselves up again.

Do you remember when you wanted something so much or had such a great idea? You had plans, invested your time and skills, and maybe even pulled strings to make it happen, but you got discouraged because of obstacles, uncooperative colleagues, or unsympathetic bosses. Your enthusiasm vanished over time. You lost confidence in your own strength and surrendered under the burden of all the difficulties.

Maybe you regret the lost opportunity or feel emptiness in your heart because your project did not work. Do not mourn anymore. Our God is the God of second chances. Today is yours!

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**Wednesday of the First Week in Lent**

**Lectionary: 226**

**Reading 1**      [JON 3:1-10](#)

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time:

"Set out for the great city of Nineveh,  
and announce to it the message that I will tell you."

So Jonah made ready and went to Nineveh,  
according to the LORD's bidding.

Now Nineveh was an enormously large city;  
it took three days to go through it.

Jonah began his journey through the city,  
and had gone but a single day's walk announcing,  
"Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed,"  
when the people of Nineveh believed God;  
they proclaimed a fast  
and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When the news reached the king of Nineveh,  
he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe,  
covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in the ashes.

Then he had this proclaimed throughout Nineveh,  
by decree of the king and his nobles:

"Neither man nor beast, neither cattle nor sheep,  
shall taste anything;  
they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water.

Man and beast shall be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God;  
every man shall turn from his evil way  
and from the violence he has in hand.

Who knows, God may relent and forgive, and withhold his blazing wrath,  
so that we shall not perish."

When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way,  
he repented of the evil that he had threatened to do to them;  
he did not carry it out.

**Responsorial Psalm**      [PS 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19](#)

**R. (19b) A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.**

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;  
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.  
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt  
and of my sin cleanse me.

**R. A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.**

A clean heart create for me, O God,  
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.

Cast me not out from your presence,  
and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

**R. A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.**

For you are not pleased with sacrifices;  
should I offer a burnt offering, you would not accept it.

My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;  
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

**R. A heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.**

**Verse Before The Gospel**      [JL 2:12-13](#)

Even now, says the LORD,  
return to me with your whole heart  
for I am gracious and merciful.

**Gospel**      [LK 11:29-32](#)

While still more people gathered in the crowd, Jesus said to them,  
"This generation is an evil generation;  
it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it,  
except the sign of Jonah.

Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites,  
so will the Son of Man be to this generation.

At the judgment  
the queen of the south will rise with the men of this generation  
and she will condemn them,

because she came from the ends of the earth  
to hear the wisdom of Solomon,  
and there is something greater than Solomon here.

At the judgment the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation  
and condemn it,  
because at the preaching of Jonah they repented,  
and there is something greater than Jonah here."