

Season of Creation

Year A

Sunday 20 September

FIRST READING

Jonah 3.10-4.11

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Jonah

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The Lord God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." Then the Lord said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?"

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

A Slower Urgency, Bá yò Akómalàfé

Everywhere I was invited to speak, I offered an invitation to 'slow down', which seems like the wrong thing to do when there's fire on the mountain. But here's the point: in 'hurrying up' all the time, we often lose sight of the abundance of resources that might help us meet today's most challenging crises. We rush through into the same patterns we are used to. Of course, there isn't a single way to respond to crisis; there is no universally correct way. However the call to slow down works to bring us face to face with the invisible, the hidden, the unremarked, the yet-to-be-resolved. Sometimes, what is the appropriate thing to do is not the effective thing to do.

Slowing down is thus about lingering in the places we are not used to. Seeking out new questions. Becoming accountable to more than what rests on the surface. Seeking roots. Slowing down is taking care of ghosts, hugging monsters, sharing silence, embracing the weird.

GOSPEL

Matthew 20.1-16

Reader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Reader: Gift From Creator Tells the Good Story.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Creator's good road from above is like this tribal member who managed a large vineyard. He went out early in the morning to find people to harvest the grapes. After they agreed with him on the amount for a full day's pay, he sent them to work. A few hours later he went to the trading post and saw people there doing nothing. He told them, 'If you will join the workers in my field, I will pay you well.' So they went to work. Then, about midday, and again at midafternoon, he went out and found others and did the same. Finally, when the day was nearly done, he found a few more people doing nothing.

'Why are you not working?' he asked them.

'No one has hired us,' they answered. He agreed to pay them fairly and sent them to work.

At the end of the day, the headman said to his manager, 'Bring the workers in from the field and pay them, beginning from last to first.'

He paid the workers hired at the end of the day a full day's wage. When the workers who were hired at the start of the day were paid, they expected to receive more but were paid the same amount.

'We have worked all day in the scorching heat,' they complained to the manager. 'Why should we be paid the same as the ones who worked only one hour?'

'I am not being unfair with you, my friend,' he said to one of them. 'Did we not agree on the amount of a full day's wages? Take your pay and go in peace. If I want to pay these men the same, what is that to you? Am I not permitted to be generous with what is mine? Or are you jealous because I have done a good thing?'

That is why I told you before," he reminded them, "the last will be first and the first will be last."

Reader: The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**