

# Homily on Luke 11,29-32

October 15, 2018

**Luke:** The crowds are seeking a sign that Jesus is from God. Many have already seen Jesus curing the blind, the deaf, the lame, or walking on water or with a word calming a storm. What more do they need? Only an evil generation needs yet another physical sign.

Perhaps some have never seen Jesus in action, and so they need a sign. But Jesus characterizes them also as part of an evil generation. He recognizes that physical signs are not the important ones. The important sign which he can give them is the example of the prophet Jonah. What they need is conversion from their evil ways.

In Matthew the sign of Jonah is that Jonah spent three days in the belly of the sea monster, and yet survived. It is a sign that points to Jesus' own resurrection from the dead after three days in the earth. But in Luke, the sign is the effectiveness of Jonah's preaching. Jonah preached repentance to a sinful Assyrian capital, and his preaching was effective: the city repented and was spared God's wrath. And Jesus is a greater prophet than was Jonah, indeed he is wiser than Solomon. Still, people are not listening to his preaching. They want signs.

## Meaning for us:

We are the evil generation. If you look at our world you see everywhere evidence of our evil. While the wealthy are rich beyond precedent, millions starve to death every year, even in our own rich land. Wars ravage our planet: In the past 80 years America has experienced only a dozen years without waging war. Human abetted climate change causes monstrous hurricanes and destruction of planetary life. Millions are homeless, and millions more are refugees. In all countries, killing infants in the womb is common.

Some of us ask for a sign from God, that God will work a miracle to save us. God occasionally does work miracles; that is why some are canonized as saints. But such signs do not save us. What we need is the miracle of listening to Jesus' preaching which is greater than that of Jonah. Jesus calls us to the Kingdom of God, to a world in which there is abundant sharing of goods, of forgiving of enemies, in which love of neighbors is the meaning of life, and in which therefore we do not judge but love one another.

Jesus not only shows us the way, but he empowers us. He sends us his powerful Spirit in baptism, in this Eucharist, and in all the sacraments of our Church. We can do what Jesus preached. When we are converted, when we have a change of mind and heart, then there will be no more poverty, no more abuse, no more dispossessed. We will be children of a compassionate God.

Ask for the grace to listen and be converted to Jesus' message, not only for yourself, but for our country and our whole world. It is the good news.