

Called to Compassion Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, October 11, 2017 8:15 AM **Jon 4:1-11;** Lk 11:1-4 (St. John XXIII, pope) (God is really asking us to share his heart, which means to share his suffering.)

We are finishing now **the Book of Jonah**, and it has about three parts to it. **The first part, Jonah is a type of Christ.** He tried to escape; he agonizes over the vocation, the calling that God gives him and tries to really get away, but then he realizes he can't. So he offers himself, allows himself to be thrown into the turbulence, but he is saved by this fish. That is a type of, you might say burial, a sepulcher. And the fish spews him out and he has life again on earth, a type of resurrection, if you will. Well that's about the end of his likeness to Christ.

Then he preaches and, unlike Christ, the word he speaks has an incredible effect on absolutely everybody, from top to bottom, throughout the entire totally depraved pagan city of Nineveh.

The third section, Jonah is grieved by the success of this mission because now this evil city is not going to be destroyed, and he is really angry about that. So in this third section Jonah does not prefigure Christ, but rather **he prefigures a lot of people who believe that they have done the right thing, that they have put their time in doing God's work and will, and that those who haven't really ought to be rightly punished.** So this reflects several of the parables Jesus told, such as the workers who are paid a full day's wage for working only an hour. In a similar way here Nineveh is given the life that belongs to God's people, even though they aren't. **So it seems like somebody is being cheated and Jonah is very upset.**

And so God sends this plant to shade him and then takes it away through a worm, and Jonah is really angry about that. So God says, "What's the matter?" He says, "Well, I'm angry; I might as well just die." God says, "You are worried about that plant, that little tree. Well," he says, "I'm worried too about my creation and I'm really concerned about it, and I should be." **This is what**

real compassion is; it's feeling with God—feeling with God—about the well-being of God's creation. It's not concern for people on a personal level, actually. It's concern for people and all people precisely because God is their Creator. God is their Father and wants them to know him, and therefore it acknowledges that God himself, in a way, hard for us to understand, but **God himself actually suffers because of people's turning away from him**, because of people's coldness or indifference, much less their utter depravity.

And that is why this ending part of Jonah is really about us and about our need to feel differently about ourselves and about others, how **God is really asking us to share his heart, which means to share his suffering.** That is a kind of holiness. It is the holiness Christ had. It is the holiness that the great saints have. It's the holiness that this book is really calling all of us to.