

HOMILY NOTES
FR. TERRY RYAN, CSP
JONAH 3: 1-5, 10
MARK 1: 14-20

There is a popular movie current at the local theatre, called, The Artist. It is a silent movie, but a quite wonderful love story. It begins in 1927, at the height of silent movie popularity. George Valentin is a famous silent screen movie star. He is successful and rich. He helps a young woman, Pepe Miller, to get started in silent films. Pepe falls in love with George, but keeps her distance. He is famous and married. In 1929 the talkies come into play and silent movies become a thing of the past along with George Valentin. The stock market crashes. George thinks talkies are ridiculous and wants nothing to do with them. He is stubborn, proud, and narrow-minded. He goes broke and sells all he has. He does not work. He drinks and feels sorry for himself. His wife leaves him. Through it all, Pepe loves him, but keeps it somewhat hidden. When George gets into trouble she tries to help him. George is too proud to let it continue. When he thinks of suicide, Pepe goes to him just in time, and professes her love. This saves George from himself. He says, "No one wants to hear me talk." Pepe remembers a talent that George has that will allow him to work again in the talkies. You have to go see the movie to find out what that is.

Pepe loved George with all his faults, not just when he was a famous star. When George realized her love, he was willing to change and his willingness began a change that saved his career or rather transformed it. God loved Jonah with all Jonah's faults. God was patient with the Jonah who did not want to go and tell Nineveh to repent. Jonah wanted Nineveh to be destroyed. In time, reluctantly, he finally went and told them to shape up. They did. Jonah was able to change a little because of God's love and patience with him.

In the gospel Jesus called fishermen to change what they are doing and follow him. He called them with all their faults which will come out as the gospel story moves along. Jesus was not looking for perfect people, but for people who had the willingness to change. He was going to love them until they finally changed after the Resurrection. Once the disciples learned how much they were loved, in spite of their faults, they were able to change and become the disciples who would give their very lives to spread the Good News. Love is what can change us to the core.

Many of us can do a kindly act, or look good, for public view or to avoid a punishment, but that is superficial change. Some of us will try to be good to avoid some punishment after death, or to get God to do something we want now. This is not deep change and does not last. Nor is it Good News. Once we grasp the reality that God loves us and would do anything to help us realize this, then deep and lasting change can take place. It is called transformation. Like George, we do not know or use the gifts and talents we have until we know of God's unconditional love of us.