



Memorial of Saint Teresa of Jesus, Virgin and Doctor of the Church

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."

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I believe that you are present here as I turn to you in prayer. I trust and have confidence in your desire to give me every grace I need to receive today. Thank you for your love, thank you for your immense generosity toward me. I give you my life and my love in return.

Petition: Lord, help me to recognize the signs of your presence in my life.

1. Three Days in the Fish: When Jonah is swallowed by the whale he dies, and when he is spit out onto the shore, he comes to life again. This is the only sign that Christ promises to his listeners who seek a sign. Christ will be seen by them as truly dead, swallowed by the tomb of the earth. Then, after three days, he will come to life again in the Resurrection. As Jonah preached conversion to the Ninevites after coming back from the dead, so Christ would bring conversion and peace to some of the very ones who abandoned him or cried out for his crucifixion. Even in rebuking the "evil generation", Christ promises them a sign that will bring hope to any of them who—like the

Ninevites—later repent. If later in life they realize their evilness, Christ himself will be there to guide them back to friendship with his Father.

2. Even the Queen Came: Christ is reminding his unbelieving listeners that the Queen of Sheba traveled from afar to hear Solomon's wisdom. The distance from the Kingdom of Sheba in southern Arabia to Jerusalem would have taken weeks to traverse. It would have been an exhausting and expensive journey, especially considering the entourage that would have accompanied the Queen. She recognized the gift of God in him and relished the pearls of divine wisdom that he shared with her. We need to reflect on how often we avail ourselves of all that God offers us that is not a journey of weeks away, but is just a few miles away: Christ in the Eucharist. Closer still, the Bible on the shelf is filled with Christ's message of love. All this is within easy reach and is much more than anything Solomon could share with us.

3. Greater than Jonah: The whale was greater than Jonah. It swallowed him whole. Yet that violent death and subsequent resurrection was the key moment in Jonah's life and mission. It was necessary not only for Jonah's own salvation (he had been running from God), but it also was necessary for the salvation of the whole city of Nineveh. Christ makes this reference to Jonah as a forewarning to his listeners: He is greater than Jonah. He is greater than the death that would swallow him. This should inspire our faith and confidence in Christ. There is nothing greater than he. There is no greater prophet; no greater event can consume him. All things are under his dominion except one: our free will. That he doesn't force; that he doesn't conquer. He leaves it perfectly intact, so that we might respond freely to his call to ongoing conversion, just like the citizens of Nineveh.

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, the sign of love that you give is your willingness to die a cruel and humiliating death. Yet that is not everything: You give me your Word in the Gospel. You give me your Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Help me to appreciate these great gifts and to make the most of every opportunity to receive them.

Resolution: At some point today, I will offer a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking Christ for the blessings received over the past few days.