



SAINT MARGARET
PARISH

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Cycle A

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Haven't we all at one point or another observed a person and thought to ourselves, why did they do that? Perhaps we were walking in the mall and saw someone with an eccentric haircut or clothing. Maybe while driving someone in front of us makes an erratic move and we think why did they do that? Or maybe now as many seniors are selecting their colleges and future plans we are left wondering why they chose as they did. In all of these scenarios we are left perplexed and even bewildered.

Well we should feel the same way in hearing today's gospel. As we look at this story we hear Jesus calling four people to follow Him. They respond yes and follow Him. They end up leaving everything behind to follow Him. Think about how mind boggling that is. Here we have four men, each of them immersed in their own worlds. They were working, two of them were even part of a family business and yet they stop what they are doing, leave behind everything and follow Him.

To add even more to this...they followed Him immediately. This word "immediately" noted by Matthew in both invitations informs us that they did not delay. They did not take a few days to weigh their options, research His proposal or get feedback from others. Instead they followed Him immediately.

What could cause such a response? What could they have seen or felt or experienced? It was not an invitation for the future but rather for now, in this moment, the Lord called them and they answered. We can only assume that their lives were changed forever because of that. Their lives changed because they heard and experienced a man, the Son of God, like no one else. And so they followed.

If only we could have such an encounter. And yet we do. We do not gather here to remember Christ but instead we gather to encounter Him in the same way Peter, Andrew, James and John did. This same Lord present in our spoken Word of the gospel and the elements of bread and wine soon to be on our altar. It is this same Lord that calls your name and mine to follow. We encounter Him today.

His invitation to follow Him is not simply some promise we hope to cash in on years from now in heaven. Rather, His call is a promise that our lives today, this very day, will be changed. It will be changed in such a way that nothing will hold us back. We too will follow Him immediately if we allow His Words to penetrate our hearts. His Words to us today are words of love and

compassion, forgiveness for our mistakes and graces to face our challenges. All of this is offered to us today by Christ.

The question therefore is not what Christ offers us nor is it how we will respond when we hear His call. Brothers and sisters, we are no different than Andrew and John and the others. We too could not help but respond immediately to hearing and experiencing the Lord as He is. The Lord invites us to follow Him. It is a promise that He will lead the way. He will protect. He will guide us. He will be with us no matter what we face. Could you say no to that? The question that remains however is whether we will allow ourselves to hear His invitation for what it is.

Some might say, oh but I pray every day for help but I feel Jesus does not answer. But our prayer so often is simply allowing God into our lives on our terms. We do bring our struggles to the Lord but then we try to direct God. God I will follow You but let me lead the way. It is then that we try to face the struggles of our lives alone and allow the clamor and noise of our pain to prevent us from hearing God's voice. In doing this we deny ourselves His comfort and love. We choose, not God, to ignore His invitation and go through life alone!

So perhaps its not the odd hair, weird clothes or even life choices of our teens that are the most perplexing. Rather, what is even more bewildering is why we, in the midst of our problems and struggles, choose to not fully trust Jesus and follow Him. As we gather in the presence of Christ today, lets think what things in our lives, what boats or nets are we not willing to leave behind and figure out why. As we do that, lets commit to praying for one another that this very day we will allow ourselves to hear Jesus calling each of us by name..Come follow me. Your life, my life, this very day...will be changed forever.