

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time A2026

In the Gospel of this morning, our Lord calls his first disciples. Before doing it and after having heard John the Baptist was arrested, he decides to leave Nazareth, to find a new headquarter in Capernaum, by the Sea of Galilee and starts preaching.

His message was very simple: everyone should repent; everyone should change. Why? Because, the Kingdom of God was near, at hand. Why, then, to change the location, from Nazareth to Galilee? Perhaps he changed the place where he was living to let people understand that there is no true relationship with God without change of life.

In any case, it became evident to him that he could not do the work of the Kingdom all by himself and he needed a group of people to help him, a small community that would eventually grow into the Church as we know it today, a community that embraces all Christians and which is constantly challenged to repentance, conversion and change!

Those first disciples, though very ordinary and simple people, unlettered fishermen, did not hesitate to follow him. Their response to our Lord's call was immediate and enthusiastic. The brothers Simon and Andrew, James and John, just left mending their nets to become fishers of men.

That call to discipleship belongs to each one of us because the mission has been passed on to us. We too share in what has been started from the beginning of the Church by our Lord and the first disciples. The vocation to discipleship, therefore, has an individual dimension as well as a communal dimension. We are called as an individual for the work of the community of the believers. That is why it would be a mistake, when a problem occurs inside the church, to think that it is just the priest's problem and not ours.

When we look at those who were chosen, we realized that they were very simple and ordinary people, that is, mere fishers. And yet our Lord chose them for the very important mission of the salvation of the world. What all this means is that though those called are very ordinary people, like you and me, they are nevertheless called to accomplish extraordinary things.

That is why we have to understand that if God calls us to work for him or for his church, it is not necessarily because we are the best among our peers. It is because, in spite of our human weaknesses, he wants us to be his coworkers and associate. The best we can do is just to be humble. If then, extraordinary things can be accomplished by our hands, we need to be aware that they are not of our making, but the outcome of the grace of God who works within us and has already preceded us in the field.

Moreover, that grace removes any fear we might have because of our unworthiness and inadequacy. In other words, what is important is not who we are as individuals, but what we can become under our Lord's guidance when we accept his call. It was like that the simple fishers became important witnesses of Jesus' teaching and signs and, eventually, repeated the same thing as he did.

Let me come back again to the identity of those first disciples. As I said, they were very simple people, however, in spite of that simplicity; our Lord chose them to be his companions in the mission and to share with him the burden and the joy of his ministry. He tells them: "I will make you fishers of men".

To pass from simple fishers to the fishers of men is quite a change. This element of change is constitutive of Christian life and at the heart of what it means to be Christian. Without a desire to change and reform our life, to adjust it to the values of God's Kingdom, it is very difficult to be a good Christian and disciple of Jesus. Thus, the opening of the public ministry of our Lord contains an invitation to change: "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand", meaning reform your life; let it be transformed so that you are able to welcome the Kingdom of God within you.

Let me finish: God's call is different from one individual to another. The circumstances of the call are also different from one individual to another. And yet, we all participate in the same mission, namely that of bringing the Good News of salvation to our brothers and sisters. What is important are not the circumstances surrounding our vocation, as different as they might be, but the mission given to us.

My vocation is really the response I gave to the call I heard from God, but it is a call for a mission that transcends my own individuality. By being called and by responding positively, I am just an instrument that God uses for the salvation of my brothers and sisters. Therefore, I have no reason for boasting; if glory can be given to someone, it is to God who chose me and not to me as an individual. That is why the Motto of many Saints has always been "Sola Gloria Dei": for the glory of God.

Let us pray, brothers and sisters that God may help us respond favorably to his call to serve him by serving our brothers and sisters. Let us ourselves be transformed by his word and become his docile instruments of salvation. Amen!

Isaiah 8: 23-9: 3; 1 Corinthians 1: 10-13, 17; Matthew 4: 12-23



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