

## Discipleship is a Communal Activity

3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Ordinary Time – Mark 1: 14-20

January 21, 2018

The gospel for today sets out the basic format of discipleship. It is not something we do alone or in a vacuum. Rather, discipleship is something we do as a communal activity. Jesus is proclaiming the coming of God's kingdom. At the same time, Jesus calls others to do this work with Him. From the beginning of Jesus' ministry the work of the Good News has been, and continues through today, as an activity of the wider community of believers. We are not in this alone or for ourselves. We are disciples for one very important reason...to help bring others to Christ.

You might be a parent teaching your own children their prayers, bringing them to Mass and demonstrating for them the importance of service. You may be a priest, who serves the needs of several parishes, at a time when the shortage of priesthood does not match the great number of parishes in need of priests. Maybe you are a business woman who serves on the pastoral council or social justice commission at church. Maybe you are a man or a woman who heads up the local Girl Scout or Boy Scout troop. You might be a high school student who helps as an assistant coach for volleyball or basketball. Maybe you visit those in the nursing home or those who are chronically ill. The list is endless.

In the gospel today, Jesus reassures us that **"The kingdom of God is at hand."** The premise of this is that God has come and now dwells with all the people of the earth through Jesus. Again, the saving action of Jesus is a communal activity. Jesus has already saved the world. It is our mission, as His followers, to let the rest of the world in on this important piece of Good News.

Jesus' invitation this week is for everyone. **"Repent, and believe in the gospel."** This is collective invitation to holiness. His invitation is not designed for just men or woman or people of one or another political agenda. We...everyone on earth... are called to turn our lives around and believe that this is the time of God's reign. It is an opportunity to grow and to live in the sanctity and sacredness that is our human right.

The four disciples from this week's gospel drop everything they are doing to follow Jesus. This is a great testimony to their faith and willingness to serve. It is also a good example of prioritization. Do we need to drop everything to follow Christ? It doesn't seem possible that one would forsake their children or spouse. Might the message for us this week be that we need to make sure that nothing else is as important as Christ?

This is the basic premise of stewardship. Everything that I have is gift. All gifts are from God. Everything belongs to God. Nothing of this earth is truly mine. We are called to collectively enjoy and share with one another the bounty of this earth, especially with those most marginalized.

This is also true of the gift of faith. We are not meant to live in a bubble with just other Catholics happily ignoring those who are not like us. We are called to share the gift of faith with all that we meet. Discipleship is a communal activity, something we do together for the sake of the kingdom.

Blessings!

  
Sue Schettler