

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

***The Fourth Sunday before Lent***

## **Gospel Reading**

**Luke 5.1-11**

### **Jesus Calls the First Disciples**

**5** Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, **2** he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. **3** He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. **4** When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' **5** Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' **6** When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. **7** So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. **8** But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' **9** For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; **10** and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' **11** When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

**Other Readings: Isaiah 6.1-8[9-13]      Psalm 138      1 Corinthians 15.1-11**

## **Homily**

Change is all around us – in our lives, in our local community, across the world and in our Churches. Change is as natural as the God-given rhythm of the seasons. Change can be unsettling, it can be stimulating, it can be resisted or welcomed with open arms.

To know Jesus is to encounter change, to be changed, to embrace change and to look for more!

In the Gospel reading we meet 3 future disciples of Jesus, Simon, James and John. In Matthew's Gospel, Andrew is named also. There are certainly others present in the story Luke tells. They probably did not set out that morning thinking 'I need a new job'. But Jesus turned up and threw them a curve ball! Jesus, a carpenter, told these 3 fishermen, how to catch fish – and in doing so, he stretched them way beyond their comfort zones.

Firstly – no-one on the lake fished during the daytime – it was too busy and the fish came nowhere near.

Then, they had just washed their nets, ready for that evening's shift on the water, trying to ensure they could care for their families. Presumably they were heading home to catch up on some sleep.

And finally, people were watching! Jesus had just finished preaching to the crowds. They were going to look pretty foolish if they did what Jesus said and actually caught the fish they had not been able to catch the night before! Their reputation was at stake.

So, what made Simon agree to put out to deep water and put down the nets?

This is not the first time that Simon has met Jesus. At the end of Chapter 4 in Luke's Gospel, Jesus healed Simon's mother in law, and within this Gospel reading, he is very much a captive audience as Jesus commandeered his boat as a pulpit from which to teach.

Simon agreed to put down the nets because it was Jesus who had asked him to – He had seen Jesus perform a healing miracle, he had heard him teach – he already knew that Jesus was special, but how special? Because he said yes to Jesus, he experienced an awe-inspiring event which he knew, probably more than the crowd, simply should not have happened.

That awe-inspiring event led to a completely different life, and a completely different way of life.

All of us can tell our own story about how we came to believe in Jesus and to follow him. And it is vitally important that we tell our story and share the good news of the Gospel with our family and friends so that, in time, they too might come to meet Jesus and believe in him, and will have their own story to tell. Some stories will involve awe-inspiring events, others won't. But each story belongs to the person telling it and it is important it gets told.

For those 3 disciples, when they decided to follow Jesus they walked in his footsteps. They followed him throughout Galilee and Samaria for 3 years. They followed Jesus with no idea of where it would lead. Fishermen in the wilderness - but something made them stay with Jesus. They were called to follow at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, they chose to stay (until it all got too dangerous for them), and then, after the events of Good Friday and Easter Day, they went back to what they knew. In John's Gospel, after the resurrection, we are told that Peter said 'I am going fishing'. Jesus met them on the shore for breakfast – and Jesus's last recorded words to Simon Peter? 'Follow me!'

When we first encounter Jesus we are also called to follow. At the low points and the high points of our lives, Jesus continues to say: 'Follow me'. This is a calling for each person here.

As disciples, our first calling is to enter into a relationship with Jesus, a relationship that is one of complete and utter trust. We follow by developing that relationship through Prayer, Bible Study and fellowship with other followers.

Our calling to a relationship with Jesus is a calling to give him our burdens and worries and to receive from him the gifts he longs to share with us peace, hope, joy, truth, love, strength, wisdom.

As disciples we are also called to action.

We are called to be people who go out and live as Christ in the world.

We are called to be people who allow Jesus to speak through us, offering challenge and rebuke as well as encouragement and love.

We are called to minister God's reconciling love to the world – all the world, not just to people like us.

We are called to bring God's word of forgiveness and of hope to all who need it.

Our calling to follow demands total commitment. That is not easy, because actually that is counter cultural in our instant society. It is not easy because it demands something which most of us are not willing to give. It demands discipline, single-mindedness, and a determination to make Jesus the centre of our lives.

To know Jesus is to encounter change, to be changed, to embrace change and to look for more! That is our calling and our joy.

### **Conversation Questions**

1. Who needs to hear your story about why you have decided to follow Jesus?
2. How can we support one another to continue to follow Jesus as we navigate the highs and lows of this life
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

### **Prayer**

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

### **Collect of the day**

*O God,  
you know us to be set  
in the midst of so many and great dangers,  
that by reason of the frailty of our nature  
we cannot always stand upright:  
grant to us such strength and protection  
as may support us in all dangers  
and carry us through all temptations;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.*

*(or)*

*Lord of the hosts of heaven,  
our salvation and our strength,  
without you we are lost:  
guard us from all that harms or hurts*

*and raise us when we fall;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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