

2021 2ND SUNDAY

Andrew and John were young, devout Jewish men. For some time they had been disciples of John the Baptist. And then one day the Baptist dramatically pointed to a passerby and cried out: "Look there is the Lamb of God." Immediately Andrew and John chased after the stranger, seeking to find out more about him.

That stranger was Jesus of Nazareth. He turned and noticed the two young men following Him and said to them: "What do you want?"

They responded, "Teacher, where do you live?" - indicating that they wished to speak with Jesus in private.

Jesus replied, "Come and see."

In St John's Gospel 'See' is a loaded word. It always has a sense of a person coming into a new depth of understanding.

That night Andrew and John became disciples of the Lord.

It was all so low-key. There was no hype; no bells; no applauding crowds. Yet that evening, the Jesus Movement was born. The very next day Andrew told his older brother, Simon Peter, and John told his older brother, James, that they had met the Messiah.

Not long later, by the Sea of Galilee, as they were mending their fishing nets, Andrew and John were called to leave everything and to follow Christ- together with their respective brothers Peter and James. That was be the definitive call. From that moment onwards all four became full-time disciples.

The vocation to follow Jesus is always Jesus' initiative. Later Jesus would be heard to say to the Twelve: "You have not chosen Me; No, I have chosen you." Discipleship always involves a personal call from Jesus.

Each of us is at Mass today because at some stage in our lives we have heard a gentle call from Jesus- similar to that of Samuel in the 1st Reading- to come, to listen, to believe. Later as we came to 'see' more deeply, we became full blooded disciples.

Discipleship calls us into an unknown future. And will inevitably involve sharing in Jesus' Cross. It means placing our lives totally into the hands of the Master. St. Ignatius sums it up radically in his prayer 'The Suscipe': "Take, Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, my entire will and all

that I possess. You have given all to me. To You, O Lord, I return them- to dispose of as You will. Just give me Your love and Your grace. That is sufficient for me.”

For most of us, our initial call to discipleship came at our Baptisms. In Baptism we were consecrated to God and made holy. As St. Paul reminded the Christians of Corinth:”When you were baptised, your bodies became temples of the Holy Spirit who came to abide within you. At that moment you came to share in the life of Christ and became a part of the Body of Christ.”

Corinth was a city notorious for the immorality of its citizens. St Paul wished the Christians of Corinth to stand up tall against this darkness. He exhorted them to look upon their bodies as sacred- as Temples of the Holy Spirit- and to treat their bodies and the bodies of others, with deep reverence. Sexual union, he taught them, was a beautiful thing when enjoyed within marriage- reflecting the self-gifting union between Christ and humanity which was sealed on the Cross. He warns, though, that to partake in sexual union outside of marriage, is to cheapen the dignity of sexual union as a reflection of the communion between Christ and the Church.

Yes, we can close our ears to God’s call to be disciples. We can fool ourselves into believing that life is all about accumulating possessions and experiencing the maximum amount of pleasure out of life day in, day out.

But constantly- daily- our good, wise and loving God calls: ‘ Come and align yourselves with My Wisdom and my dreams for you. Open your hearts to My Love.

I love Francis Thompson’s poem “The Hound O Heaven”. He wrote, in part: “I fled God down the nights and down the days- down the arches of the years- down the labyrinthine ways of my mind, I hid from Him. But His strong feet followed me with unhurrying chase and imperturbable pace. With deliberate speed and majestic constancy, they beat behind me.”

We can flee from God and ignore His call to ‘Come and See’. But Christ will never give up on any of us. All of our lives we will hear the strong beat of the feet of the Hound of Heaven behind us- accompanying us, watching over us.

Pray for the openness and wonderful enthusiasm that Andrew and John showed on that day by the River Jordan. Try to respond with full-bodied love to Christ’s call to discipleship just as they did.