



## Matthew 4:12-23

- **Jesus calls people as they are, from where they are, being who they are.**

As Jesus walks beside the water, the soon-to-be-disciples are engaged in their everyday jobs: earning a living for themselves and their families by fishing in the Sea of Galilee. They are probably at the lower end of the socio-economic ladder; their work is dirty and physically challenging, and it demands their attention from sunup to sundown. Jesus does not seem to be bothered by their grimy fingernails, their wet and dirty clothing, not even by their low social status or lack of political power. The One with the kingly pedigree (*see the birth narrative*) does not demand that they shower up before joining his mission, nor does he ask questions about their education, their abilities, nor their availability for an extended time away from home.

To Simon and Andrew, Jesus promises to expand their skills: these men who cast nets for fish will one day catch people, instead. As for the sons of Zebedee, James and John, they receive only a call: no hints about what follows, no details about the mission, no promises of success. Remarkably, all four of these people, just as they are, follow after this stranger who interrupts their daily routine. All that is asked of them at this point is simply that they follow: as they are, from where they are, being who they are. As is true for the followers of Jesus who come after them, the meaning of their choice will unfold only over time.

Our encounter with Jesus in the scriptures sets us a challenge, always. It speaks to us in our situation, our circumstances and our time. We are asked to respond with the gifts and talents we have, now. The call is always transformative and immediate.

- **God's call invites and empowers choices.**

Jesus might have preferred to stay in the Judean wilderness, where "the angels came and waited on him" (Matthew 4:11). When the news comes to him about John's arrest, he makes a different choice, however, by withdrawing to Galilee, where he calls his first disciples, preaches the Sermon on the Mount, begins his ministry of healing, and teaches what it means to be the Messiah who is "God with us." Those first disciples, for their part, might have preferred to keep their jobs, to remain with their families, to stay with the life that they knew. When they see Jesus and hear his words to them, they make a different choice, however; they take a risk, step out in faith, leave behind that which is comfortable and secure. They choose to follow Jesus.

The call in scripture is also to each and every one of us today. How will we respond? To know Jesus we must dare to know him in the scripture. Can we step out and take the risk?

- **Called to be agents of change**

In the Gospel today Matthew reminds us of the power and persuasion that is present when someone stands up and talks about the difference their faith has made in their lives. Luke's version of this story also reminds us in a way that Matthew's lesson does not, that women played a significant role in Jesus' ministry. The twelve disciples were men, but they were not the only followers, who travelled with Jesus. He was eagerly supported by many women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and, of course, Mary and Martha of Bethany, the sisters of Lazarus. Whether male or female, those who travelled with Jesus had one thing in common — Jesus dramatically entered their lives, asked something from them, and they joyfully enlisted in an enterprise that changed their lives and others. In short, they became agents of new possibility. Is this not the Church, a parish at its best ... a community of faith making a loving difference in people's lives? Jesus had a wonderful way of not only speaking in a powerful manner but he supported his words with persons who gave their witness through both the words they said and the lives they led. He walked their journey with them, supported them and trusted them to carry on his message. Today asked to hear Jesus' word calling us to be disciples, agents of change in our own community. We are asked to witness to our faith through our own words and actions. And we have the certainty that we are supported by scripture and that our loving God journeys with and trusts in us.

- **Suggestion for a Children's mass**

**Object:** Paper dolls or a few different dolls that look different from one another.

**Note:** Keep them hidden for the moment.

I want you to listen carefully to the description I give right now. I'm going to ask you to use the information in a moment. I'm thinking of a paper/ doll. It has... *(describe the unique characteristics of one of the dolls)*

**Then, unveil, and ask...**

Tell me which one of the dolls do you think I talking about?

You were able to identify the doll correctly because of my description, given beforehand.

In a similar way, the people of Jesus' time could identify him as the promised Saviour. How?

God had given them a description ahead of time.

God's Old Testament prophets described many things about what the Saviour would be like:

He would make blind eyes see, paralyzed people walk, deaf ears able to hear, mute tongues able to speak; and that the good news of God would be preached.

So what was Jesus like?

The same way the New Testament and the Gospels tell us ways to identify Jesus working in our world today.

So if we were looking for Jesus what would we look for?...

So if we want to be like Jesus and follow him what have we to do? ...