

The Holy Spirit Province

NEWSLETTER

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Do you really believe, that Jesus has chosen you to be his disciple, as well as a missionary and agent of his love, to others?

In our various communities, we are fortunately not all the same. We have health workers, lawyers, tradespeople, teachers, and students. There are those who work more than one job, and those who simply cannot find work. There are adults and children, retired and semi-retired persons, family persons, and single ones. There are those born here and those born overseas, sick people and healthy, carers and cared for. There are big-picture persons and those with attention to detail. There are passive people and there are active ones. There are those strong on theory and those that make things happen. There are those who talk a lot, and those that do a lot. There are those who think a great deal, and those who cannot concentrate.

For all our differences, there are two things we have in common, which we treasure. We are human beings together and we are Christians together. We have been baptized by Jesus (through his Church) and have become his disciples. Within our different situations, we keep striving to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and to keep walking in his footsteps. What he has called us to be and to do, become clearer from today's gospel story.

Mark relates that as soon as Jesus began his work in Galilee, he recruited Simon and his brother Andrew, as well as James and John, the two sons of Zebedee. He chose them to be his companions and to work with him to make God's loving rule happen everywhere, and over everybody and everything. There and then they left their occupations and their families to follow Jesus as his disciples, and like him, to become 'fishers of people'.

In the gospels, the word 'disciple' means 'learner'. We note that his followers did not choose Jesus as their teacher. No, he chose them to learn from him as life-long learners within an ongoing relationship with him. As they journeyed with him from place to place, they would experience his kindness, compassion, and pastoral care, again and again, towards thousands of people in urgent need of deliverance from physical, mental, or emotional illnesses. On their shared journeys, he would tell them his parables and other very important truths. They were to share his wisdom, his life-style, his sufferings, and hardships. Sometimes they, like their Leader, would even find themselves without a roof over their heads, sleeping rough.

But despite the trust and affection Jesus gives his disciples, they don't come through the pages of the gospels as larger-than-life heroes, who effectively and efficiently promote and expand the mission of Jesus. We note that his very first choices are, in fact, a bunch of uneducated fishermen, and the rest of his eight later choices hardly stand out as simply the best people for the job. At times they misunderstand their teacher so badly, that they come through as dull and stupid - thick as bricks. For all that, we recognise that they are the ones

Jesus deliberately and personally chooses to share his mission of making the kingdom happen - the rule and reign of God over everyone and everything

All this leaves you and me with a great deal of hope. Jesus has picked us, with all our faults and failings, but with all our potential, to be on his Coming of the Kingdom Team. Right now, we are even his Team of the Century.

The first thing to emphasize about all that is that he needs us. His mission in our world will not happen without us. To illustrate! A poor boy in a ghetto was being teased by another boy who said, 'If God loves you, why doesn't he take care of you? Why doesn't God tell someone to bring you shoes, a warm coat, and better food?' The little lad thought for a moment. Then, with tears in his eyes, he answered, 'I guess God does tell somebody, but somebody forgets.'

The beauty of the call of Jesus to each of us, communicated by his connecting us to him at baptism, means that each of us may tell ourselves this truth: 'He has chosen me, not because of any merits and achievements on my part, but simply because he loves me and wants me on his Kingdom of God Team. He has chosen me, not because I am more virtuous, more gifted, or more suited than someone else, but only because he loves me and wants me.'

This means that for the mission of Jesus, which is the mission of God, I am a partner and a player. My life, my efforts, and my contribution, count a lot.

So, to return to our leading question!

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