

Today we celebrate the third Sunday of Ordinary time:

After John the Baptist had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." As Jesus passed by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. Jesus walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So, they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him. The Gospel of the Lord.

Last week we heard the Lord say to two of John the Baptist disciples "come and see," today we hear Him invite four fishermen to "come and follow Him."

After reflecting on Jesus' call to those fishermen, I've come up with four "P's" to describe the Lord's invitation.

First, his invitation was Personal: The Lord went to where Peter, Andrew, James and John were working and called them by name. It wasn't a general invitation but an individual one.

Secondly, His invitation was offered regardless of their Prior Resumé: The Lord asked them to come just the way they were, flaws and all. Jesus wasn't concerned with what they were but was hopeful about what they would become, "Fishers of Men". No prior resumé was required, they were called with no strings attached.

Thirdly, it was not a Pushy invitation: Jesus didn't demand or force or frighten these future Apostles to respond, they freely followed Him after hearing His kind voice.

Finally, his call was for the Present Moment: It was not meant for yesterday or tomorrow but the fishermen were invited to come that day. Jesus said, "This is the time of fulfillment. Today is the day of salvation."

Jesus invitation to each of us can also be describe with the four P's, it's personal, no prior resumé is needed, it's not pushy and He calls us in the present moment.

Pope Francis believes that the Lord's invitation is intended for everyone. He said, "I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ. No one should think that this invitation is not for him or her."

There is a story of Jesus sleeping in a boat with His disciples and a violent storm comes out of nowhere. They wake Jesus up, telling Him, "We are perishing, Jesus we are perishing, don't you care." Jesus rebukes the storm and everything is calm and peaceful again. In their amazement the disciples say to one another say "What sort of man is this that even the sea and the wind obey Him?" What an interesting question, "what sort of person is He? Jesus is the kind of person who believes in us even though we might not always believe in ourselves. He is the kind of person we can trust, for He assures us that He will never leave us. He is the kind of person who waits for us to come to Him the storms of our lives.

There is a poem written by Myra Brooks Welch called "The touch of the Master's hand".

'Twas battered and scarred and the auctioneer
thought it scarcely worth his while
to waste much time on the old violin,
but he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bid, good folk?" he cried.
"Who'll start the bidding for me?
A dollar, a dollar ... now two ... only two ...
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"

"Three dollars once, three dollars twice,
Going for three" ... but no!
From the room far back a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow.

Then wiping the dust from the old violin
and tightening up the strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet,
as sweet as an angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
with a voice that was quiet and low,
Said, "What am I bid for the old violin?"
As he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars ... and who'll make it two?
Two...two thousand, and who'll make it three?
Three thousand once and three thousand twice ...
Three thousand and gone!" said he.

The people cheered, but some exclaimed
"We do not quite understand ...
What changed its worth?" and the answer came:
" 'Twas the touch of the master's hand."

And many a person with soul out of tune
and battered and scarred is auctioned cheap by the
thoughtless crowd just like the old violin.

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
never can quite understand
the worth of a soul, and the change that is wrought
by the touch of the master's hand.

There may be times when we might feel stained, tattered
or scarred. Maybe we have come in here today feeling
out of tune and not sure how much we are worth. Come
closer to the Lord today and be touched by the Master's
hand?

I have attached the text to my poem, "Just as you are."
Please take some time this week to reflect on their words
and hear Him kindly whisper your name.

Let us Pray: please pray after me: Lord Jesus, you said,
come to you if I'm feeling weary or burdened and you will
give me rest." Today I cast my cares on you because you
care for me. Amen and Amen.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU, MAY GOD'S FACE SHINE UPON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU, MAY GOD LOOK ON YOU KINDLY AND GIVE YOU PEACE.

MAY MARY OUR LOVING MOTHER, HOLD YOU IN HER TENDER ARMS.