

## John 1: 35-42

It was a motley variety of men and women that Jesus called to be his disciples. Big, brave, bold Peter, “Rocky”, who boasted that he would die for Jesus ran away with the other disciples when Jesus was arrested, and denied knowing him three times; Judas betrayed him; James and John selfishly wanted power in the Kingdom of God; Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead without physical proof; Matthew was a despised tax-collector and Mary Magdalene had a dubious reputation, too. None of them had an A-Level in Religious Education.

Jesus had many disciples but he chose a special group of 12. Our Gospel reading tells of the call of the first of them. Mark tells us that four fishermen left their nets or boat **at once**. There was no “perhaps” or “maybe later.” They trusted Jesus and wanted to follow him and be his disciples, (disciples are learners). The challenge was irresistible but no doubt they all had a feeling of inadequacy and unworthiness. In Luke’s Gospel, after his huge catch of fish, Peter says to Jesus, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” (Luke 5:8) I wonder what Jesus said after that. Perhaps it was something like “I believe in you, Peter. Stop looking at your limitations and fears and concentrate on my love, my mercy and my strength. If you do that then we can do great things together.”

Just as Jesus believed in Simon Peter, so God believes in you and me. That might frighten us and we may feel inadequate and unworthy, but we need to remember that no disciple in the whole of History has ever been perfect. God is not interested in our limitations but in our potential. He acts through human beings to extend and continue his Kingdom of love. People who live the Kingdom are able, by God’s grace, to meet life’s tragedies, failures, challenges and opportunities, with the loving purposes of Our Lord. Only people can be the Body of Christ. We are asked to concentrate on God’s love, mercy and strength working in and through each one of us. Together with God

**WE** can do great things. My favourite Saint – Francis of Assisi prayed, “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.” That simple prayer describes the role of every disciple in history. The disciple throws away his or her “L-plates” and becomes an Apostle, (one who is sent out) – to be a humble channel who allows God’s love, peace and mercy to flow through them to witness to an unbelieving and uncaring world. We can all do great things with, and for, God because He believes in us. True disciples do not sit smugly in pews twiddling their thumbs. They need to be ready for new opportunities, for new challenges, to leave their old life behind. They need a willingness to follow and obey, ready to say like Samuel, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.” (1Samuel 3:10)

“Christ has no body now on Earth but yours, no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which is to look out Christ’s compassion to the World; yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which he is to bless us now.”

(Prayer attributed to Saint Teresa of Avila 1515 – 1582)

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