

Mark 1:14-20 Reflection

Our gospel reading this morning locates the moment when Jesus launches his public life in an encounter between him and Simon, Andrew, James and John: ordinary fishermen, going about the usual tasks of their daily working lives.

Mark's gospel, essentially, boils down to an attempt to answer two questions, namely, "Who is Jesus?", and, "What are Jesus' disciples meant to be like?"

The ways of following Jesus are, of course, as many and varied as people are themselves but, for each of us, it requires us to reflect on why it is that we are followers of Christ? What difference does this make to our lives?

It was into the normal daily round of life as fishermen that Jesus stepped and spoke with power and authority to Simon, Andrew, James and John. They were busy getting on with the "day job". They weren't looking for Jesus, but it was in the midst of the ordinariness of their daily lives, that Jesus came and said to them, "Follow me".

It is in the midst of our daily life that Jesus comes to us, too, although we might not necessarily recognise and respond to him in the same way that the first disciples did.

I would venture to say that Jesus has been there saying "Follow me" throughout the pandemic, calling us to trust him and to respond to the challenges which this has placed on us in our discipleship. Have we heard him calling to us through the storm?

Jesus' call to those first disciples was a call to do something new and different with their lives. If we believe in a God who is present and active in His world, we will see the way he has been calling so many people to do new and different things in their response to the challenges we've faced over the past year.

Even if we do not feel we are being called to help with, say, food banks, prescription deliveries, or other more active community projects, we have all had an opportunity perhaps to pray more, or to reach out to friends or family by checking up on one another more frequently; or we may have gained an expanded vision of what is really important in our lives. Jesus call to "follow him" can therefore expand our vision and encourage us to step out in a different direction on our inner journey.

When you go on a physical journey you have to make decisions about what to take and what to leave behind. In a similar way, when we consider our journey of discipleship in the light of Jesus' call, we perhaps need to decide what "baggage" from our pre-Covid life needs to be kept and preserved and what, maybe needs to be let go.

Today's gospel offers us an opportunity to consider what we want to preserve and expand if we are going to take Jesus' call to us seriously and, like the first disciples, pledge ourselves afresh to follow him.

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