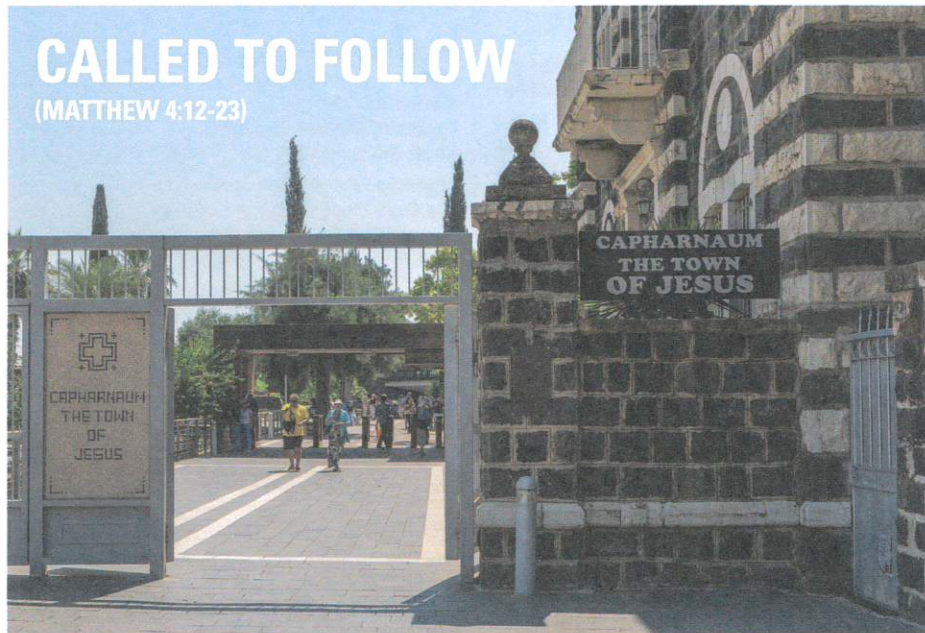


Sunday Message

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 22 January 2023 • Psalter Week 3



CALLED TO FOLLOW

(MATTHEW 4:12-23)

The arrest of John signalled Jesus out as a marked man. He left the Jordan valley and returned to his home country of Galilee. But not quite. He didn't go back to home and family in Nazareth, to familiar job and surroundings. He went instead to a town called Capernaum.

Today, Capernaum is a few acres of ruins on the shores of the lake of Galilee, while Nazareth is a bustling town of thousands of inhabitants. In the days of Jesus, it was different. Nazareth was an isolated mountain hamlet, Capernaum a busy port on an international trading route, which Matthew and the prophet Isaiah long before him knew as "The Way of the Sea".

The extended Jewish family provided a total care system. It gave a comforting familiarity to life, but there was a price to pay. No doubt there were family pressures on Jesus to be like everyone else – to settle down, build up the family carpentry business, pick a nice local girl and get married. If he conformed, his place in the system was assured.

Jesus, on the other hand, needs to get away. His sense of mission will not allow him to settle down like all the rest. In Capernaum, Jesus sets about forming a new group around himself. There must have been something magnetic about his personality to make people leave what they knew to follow him. Matthew tells us in the last lines of today's Gospel why Jesus needs space and freedom. It is so that the Good News of the kingdom and its healing can be proclaimed. ■

SAY

Lord, thank you for inviting me to follow you. Help me to follow you every day of my life.

DO

Reflect on what it means to you to be a follower of Jesus. How closely do you follow him? How much would you be prepared to give up to follow him?

PRAY

Pray for Christians persecuted for their faith.

LEARN

A disciple is one who follows.

The Christian is called to follow Jesus whatever the cost.

As baptised Christians, each of us is obliged to proclaim the Gospel.

REFLECT

Question: Who or what do you follow?

Today's Gospel is about following. Jesus calls his first disciples, and they drop everything and follow him. They abandon everything to follow him. They leave behind their families, jobs, and old way of life and follow this charismatic street preacher. It seems like a reckless thing to do. And yet these pairs of brothers do it.

Can you imagine doing something like that today – giving up all you're familiar with to follow someone? Giving up all you are familiar with to follow Jesus?

But lots of people still do it. Religious vocations may not be as plentiful as in the past, but some young people still choose to dedicate their lives entirely to God, ministering either at home or overseas. They have dropped everything to follow Jesus.

Unlike these "professional" religious, we don't have to drop everything and follow – but we are called to follow. We all become followers of Jesus through our baptism and are called to follow him faithfully every day. We do that by loving God and each other as best we can; by serving God and each other as best we can. By trying to be good people.

On social media, you can unfollow someone if you like. You can also give up following a particular political party or celebrity, or even a sports team if they disappoint you too much.

But for us Christians, the challenge is never to give up following Jesus. That, even when we stumble and fail, we pick ourselves up and follow him again; that, even when the Church lets us down, we don't let its weakness stop us from honouring our baptismal calling. That no matter what trials or setbacks come our way, we never stop following Jesus.

So that question again: Who do you follow? Do you follow Jesus as fervently as your local rugby or football team? Or your favourite soap? How dedicated a Christian are you? ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good
pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 8:23-9:3

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
In days past the Lord humbled the land of
Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in days
to come he will confer glory on the Way of
the Sea on the far side of Jordan, province of
the nations.

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the
spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 26

Response:

The Lord is my light and my help.

- The Lord is my light and my help;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
before whom shall I shrink? (R.)

- There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple. (R.)
- I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord! (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. 17

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our
Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences
between you, and instead of disagreeing
among yourselves, to be united again in your
belief and practice. From what Chloe's people
have been telling me, my dear brothers, it
is clear that there are serious differences
among you. What I mean are all these
slogans that you have, like: "I am for Paul," "I
am for Apollos," "I am for Cephas," "I am for
Christ." Has Christ been parcelled out? Was
it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you
baptised in the name of Paul?

For Christ did not send me to baptise, but
to preach the Good News, and not to preach
that in the terms of philosophy in which the
crucifixion of Christ cannot be expressed.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the
kingdom,
and cured all kinds of sickness among the
people.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 4:12-23

(For shorter form, read between > and <)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

> Hearing that John had been arrested Jesus
went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth
he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside
town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali.
In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be
fulfilled:

Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!
Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan,
Galilee of the nations!
The people that lived in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who dwell in the land and shadow
of death
a light has dawned.

From that moment Jesus began his
preaching with the message, "Repent, for the
kingdom of heaven is close at hand." <

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee
he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called
Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were
making a cast in the lake with their net, for
they were fishermen. And he said to them,
"Follow me and I will make you fishers of
men." And they left their nets at once and
followed him.

Going on from there he saw another pair
of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his
brother John; they were in their boat with

their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and
he called them. At once, leaving the boat and
their father, they followed him.

He went round the whole of Galilee
teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming
the Good News of the kingdom and curing
all kinds of diseases and sickness among the
people.

> The Gospel of the Lord. <
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray,
and in sanctifying them
grant that they may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Look toward the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, receiving the grace
by which you bring us to new life,
we may always glory in your gift.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.