

Remembrance Sunday 11/11/12 Rev. Vincent Gardner

'Come with me'-Church as the anvil for our ego.

Today four men have an encounter with Jesus. Jesus is beginning his public ministry, and he came into Galilee and passing along by the Sea of Galilee he called these fishermen to become fisher of men.

Mark Twain loved to go fishing, but he hated to catch fish. The problem was he went fishing to relax, and catching fish ruined his relaxation, since he had to take the fish off the hook and do something with it. When he wanted to relax by doing nothing, people thought he was lazy, but if he went fishing he could relax all he wanted. People would see him sitting by the river bank and they would say, "Look, he's fishing, don't bother him." So Mark Twain had the perfect solution: he would take a fishing rod, line, and a float/bobber, but he wouldn't put a hook on the end. He would cast the float/bobber in the water and lay back on the bank. That way he could relax all he wanted and he would be bothered neither by people nor fish.

Notice the technique Jesus used. The text says, *"He saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him."*

Can you feel the urgency, the immediacy, the conviction, of these men? When Jesus called these fishermen the story could have had a vastly different course. They could have scratched their heads and discussed the pros and cons with each other, their families and neighbours. They could have told Jesus, *'well let us think about it for awhile, maybe something even better will come along. Maybe a big school of fish will come and we will not be able to leave, maybe our wives won't let us, maybe our friends will make fun of us for leaving our jobs, our home and our families to follow a guy would will travel around the country side preaching that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'*

But when Jesus called these fishermen there was none of the above, they didn't question his call, they didn't think about it, they didn't consult their families, they didn't see if anything better would come along, they followed him. When Jesus through his Holy Spirit encounters us today to follow him and let him be the Lord of our lives, he doesn't want us to think about it, to weigh it, to study the pros and cons, to talk to our family and friends, to wait and see if something better will come along, or the situation in which we find ourselves will improve. When Jesus calls us there is a sense of urgency, there is a sense that Jesus is erupting into our lives with such a strong force that we have no choice but to decide now, not tomorrow or the next day, but now, now while he encounters us; while his presence is with us, while we have him besides to encourage us in our decision.

There were a group of people standing outside a very large and ornate cathedral in Europe and they were admiring the very fine craftsmanship, the detail work, the care and the love that seemed evident in building such a fine place to worship a loving God. One of the men turned to another in the group and

said, "Why can't we build like that today? Why can't we build with such pride, such craftsmanship today, and the other man replied, "They had convictions; we have opinions."

Isn't that true? When Jesus encounters us, he doesn't want our opinions about him, he wants our conviction that he is the lord of life, that we are his servants and he is the master, he is the leader. We are the followers, we are his children, and he is the father provider. At this moment; today, I would suggest God isn't primarily interested in your opinion, in what you think about this part of liturgy

I am sure many of us have heard countless sermons but would find it hard pressed to remember more than a handful. I personally remember one sermon illustration from my childhood given by a visiting preacher describing the concept of church: church isn't a social club (*relationality*) or library (*biblical knowledge*), but a blacksmith's. Standing in the centre is a great, big anvil (*altar table*). And each week we choose to come and worship, and in so doing place our ego/self on this anvil and allow God to continue to mould us/redefine us in his image.

Church is a place where of course we can explore ideas, discover needs, issues within society and respond as a group. But primarily church is a place where we are overtaken. Where we gather as individuals and allow our 'selves', our 'ego's' to be commandeered by another. Where we hear God say to us 'stop for a moment, for an hour and let me speak.' 'Come with me and I will teach you.'

When Jesus calls us, when he encounters us, he does so with a sense of urgency, with a sense of immediacy, with a sense of conviction, with a sense of commitment, with a sense that we will turn our entire lives over to him. Then notice what he said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

But over to him what does that mean? Over to the views of a particular Vicar and his interpretation of what God is saying? Or a church lobby group? Or the views expressed by a powerful Christian writer?

How do allow our minds/egos to rest and allow God to speak? Take today for example: all our different views about remembrance and war. We can feel our ego's wanting to voice them; but is it about us? See Laurence Binyon.

Fishermen, they knew what he was talking about, they would become fishers of men, they would go out and catch others for Jesus. They would catch other with the gospel message of repentance, and forgiveness that Jesus was proclaiming. They would share with others the good news that Jesus was sharing with them, Not only does Jesus call us to a life of urgency and conviction, but he calls us to a task, he calls us to a job, he calls us to do something with what he has given us. He calls us to share, he calls us to give to others what he has first given to us, his love, his caring, his forgiveness.

Yes, a Christian is one who shares with another, who knows how to share because he or she has been sharing the gospel message while they lived their pilgrimage on this earth.' Shari is the call word, the sign that marks the life of a follower of Jesus. Sharing our faith, sharing our resources, sharing a part of ourselves with others is what this life is all about as we follow the master. Jesus calls us to a life of conviction, to a life of urgency, to a live of sharing,, to a live of proclaiming his good news to others. But you might we wonder, who do I share this story with, who is the one that I tell about Jesus? Who???

There was a little girl who had a very large collection of dolls heaped on her bed. A guest in her room one day asked her "Do you love dolls" Then with tender loving care she spread out the whole collection for

the guest to inspect and admire. the guest asked her, "Which doll do you love the most?" She hesitated, then said, " Promise not to laugh if I tell you." He promised. She picked a ragged doll with a broken nose whose hair had mostly come off, and one arm and leg were missing. "This is the one." "Why?" the visitor asked. "Because if I didn't love this one nobody else would."

Jesus calls us to love the ones in this world that nobody else will love. That is not just the universal poor, but the annoying poor who live to close for comfort, the warmongers, this week's scapegoat whoever that might be. Jesus calls us to reach out to the lonely, to the hungry, to the sick, to the ones in prison, to the disabled, to the forsaken, to the needy, to all of those people who need to hear that someone indeed does love them and that someone is Jesus Christ.

Story> Polpo: Venetian cooking book/Restaurant. Hidden away but serving up something exquisite and life-changing. Similar to St. John & St. Stephen.

Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God that the kingdom of God was at hand. He asks us to go into the entire world with that same message, the message of the good news of God and that his kingdom is now it is at hand. Jesus calls us to a live of conviction, to a life of urgency, to a live of reaching out with his message of love and forgiveness to all the people we encounter in life.

Amen