

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community + Spirit of Christ Mission  
The Third Sunday, Winter Ordinary time-January 22, 2023  
Isaiah 8:23-9:3; Psalm 27: 1,4, 13-14; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13,17; Matthew 4:12-23

HOMILY – Fr. Ed Hislop

Ordinary people: gainfully employed in one of the most stable occupations of the area; fishermen, brothers, successful in their work, perhaps with some “troubles,” but seemingly confident and likely content with their lives the way they were. Each one, probably, feeling comfortable in whatever community they found support, likely caught up in all the various divisions, politics, and religious controversies, of their homeland, synagogue and faith. Who knows what they thought, agreed on, argued about, the values they held in common, anguish they felt, or gloomy darkness that may have frightened them.

All we really know about them, at this point, is that they were seen. Seen in such a way as they had never been seen before. Seen in a new light, which must have touched them in a manner that began to fill them with an abundance of joy; a light which intrigued, inspired, and compelled each one to see themselves, and one another, in a new light. Zebedee, the father of the two, must have seen too—he let them go, likely with his blessing.

The heart and mind of each one must have been freed from whatever burdened, oppressed, or weighed heavy upon their heart. Joy and wonder must have filled them as they saw in the eyes of this stranger a love, deeper than they had ever felt before. They were seen, finally seen. The gentle words, the piercing gaze, and the intriguing smile, drew them to hear, and then heed, the invitation, “Come, follow me,” inspiring in them a new mission, a new way of living, working and being—called away from narrow-mindedness and mean-spirited competition; called from participating in divisions and certitude (like those described by St. Paul in his letter to the Church at Corinth), and called from the web of their own prejudices and presumptions. Called to something they themselves did not choose. It was a call to see, like they were seen; to see others, all others, a call to become “fishers of people,” people of every sort and

kind, especially those who walk in darkness, live in the land of gloom; the too many distressed, burdened or weighed down by the “taskmasters” of the day. Called to see all others by the wondrous light and intriguing spirit by which they were seen. It was a call from “certitude” to faith, from work to loving service. A call to see as they had been seen and thus able to see the need to heal, welcome, care for all they could now see.

So here we are today, gathered to work, listen, sing, pray, encounter, offer gifts, give thanks, remember, and become someone beyond ourselves. Here *we* are seen. Seen in a new light, ordinary people, content, troubled, casting our nets, often in the same old way; and at other times trying to mend the old nets long worn out. Here we are all seen—not just by one another, but by the one who is here because we have gathered in his name. Seen for who we are, with all our strength and weakness, our divisions, and common beliefs; our hopes, fears, struggles and loves.

Here we recognize that we are seen, seen like we have never been seen before, Seen into the very depths of heart and soul amid our ordinary life, troubles and security’s; deeply loved, and called: called to be healed, and to heal bodies, minds, and spirits, called to smash the yoke that burdens others and to help them carry the load. Called to work for unity, hospitality, and peace even in the midst of division and misunderstanding; called to respect the struggles and commitment of others. Called to see and be seen. Called to be fishers of people, all people.

Here in this place, around this Table of Word and Eucharist, Christ no longer “walks by:” here he sees us and loves us; here he enters our spirit, heart, mind, body, soul, and everyday life.

Here this Christ is seen in us, ordinary people, opening our eyes and heart to see him in all others. Here we are, sent to see. The invitation echoes from generation to generation, from the rising of the sun to its setting: **“COME AFTER ME... FROM WHERE YOU ARE!”**

