

LIVING FAITH

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

JANUARY 17, 2021



THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

John 1:35-42

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed).

He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter).

REFLECTING ON THE WORD OF GOD



Many of us were taught that to be a faithful Christian, within the denomination of Roman Catholicism, one has to go to mass on a regular basis, follow the laws of the Church and believe in our faith as articulated in the Creeds. This is all of course true, but we see in the readings today another, crucial dimension of belief in God that is not often discussed: having an openness to discover God.

In the first reading, Samuel is called by God, but he doesn't understand the call, nor does he understand *who* is calling him. Hearing his name three times, Samuel presumes that his teacher is calling him. He is not. After the third time, Eli senses that it is God calling the young man. Now, he teaches Samuel how to be open when next he hears God's call, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." In the Gospel Andrew, a disciple of the John the Baptist, is pointed in the direction of Jesus and his questions to him, is "Where are you staying?". To this Jesus invites him, "Come, and see." Andrew comes to Christ with a question, seeking to know where Jesus lives, where can he be found. Jesus does not give a direct answer, but instead invites him to come and see; it is an invitation to join, to build a relationship and to discover.

To be a Christian in our complex world is not easy, however a fundamental part of the Christian identity is found in both Samuel and Andrew's openness. In both cases they are open to discover. Samuel is open by listening to God. To listen is to quiet one's mind and hold one's judgements and ideas to one side so as to engage in dialogue that will inform and change. When we listen to anyone, but especially to God, we begin a relationship and a connection that can transform us. To be a Christian, is to adopt a disposition of listening and to risk being changed by what we hear; this is primarily true when we listen to God, but it is also true when we extend that listening to one another.

Andrew, too is open. He is bold and asks Jesus a question. A genuine follower of Christ is not afraid to ask questions of God, and of God's son. In fact, questions are the engines that drive us to gain knowledge, to learn and to grow. Andrew's question leads him to discover where Jesus is staying; in a metaphorical sense, Andrew is asking where can he find Christ in his life; he seeks the Lord, he is open to discover. And he grows not only in knowledge of Christ but in a life changing relationship with Him. In our lives as followers of Jesus Christ may we grow through the examples of Samuel and Andrew to become more open and strive to be better listeners, questioners, and seekers of Christ in our lives.

TALKING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS



- How are you open to God's presence and God's call in your life?
- Where do you see or hear God? What are some of the ways that you answer God?

As a family, talk about where you see or hear God in our world. Draw some pictures to show your thoughts and ideas.



THE CHURCH TEACHES WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

In 2013, Pope Francis wrote an Apostolic Exhortation entitled *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel). In it, he called the entire Church to a missionary transformation, and every individual to be a missionary disciple.

Pope Francis begins the letter with these words:

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew... (EG, 1)
How have you encountered Jesus? Where have you encountered Jesus?



Pope Francis writes:

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord".[1] The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms... (EG, 3)

What does it feel like, to know that Jesus is waiting for you with open arms?

Pope Francis says that every one of us are called to be Missionary Disciples:

In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are always "missionary disciples". If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples, who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: "We have found the Messiah!" (Jn 1:41). The Samaritan woman became a missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans come to believe in him "because of the woman's testimony" (Jn 4:39). So too, Saint Paul, after his encounter with Jesus Christ, "immediately proclaimed Jesus" (Acts 9:20; cf. 22:6-21). So what are we waiting for? (EG, 120)

How are you a missionary disciple in your everyday life? By what actions do you proclaim the Good News of Jesus?





POPE FRANCIS PROCLAIMS THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH



DECEMBER 8, 2020-DECEMBER 8, 2021

In a new Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, and a father in the shadows. Last week, we shared the first aspect. The second aspect of St Joseph that Pope Francis shines a light on is of Joseph as a tender and loving father to Jesus. Here’s what Pope Francis has to say...

Joseph saw Jesus grow daily “in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favour” (Lk 2:52). As the Lord had done with Israel, so Joseph did with Jesus: he taught him to walk, taking him by the hand; he was for him like a father who raises an infant to his cheeks, bending down to him and feeding him (cf. Hos 11:3-4).

In Joseph, Jesus saw the tender love of God: “As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him” (Ps 103:13). In the synagogue, during the praying of the Psalms, Joseph would surely have heard again and again that the God of Israel is a God of tender love, who is good to all, whose “compassion is over all that he has made” (Ps 145:9).

The history of salvation is worked out “in hope against hope” (Rom 4:18), through our weaknesses. All too often, we think that God works only through our better parts, yet most of his plans are realized in and despite our frailty. Thus Saint Paul could say: “To keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me: ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness’” (2 Cor 12:7-9).

Since this is part of the entire economy of salvation, we must learn to look upon our weaknesses with tender mercy.

The evil one makes us see and condemn our frailty, whereas the Spirit brings it to light with tender love. Tenderness is the best way to touch the frailty within us. Pointing fingers and judging others are frequently signs of an inability to accept our own weaknesses, our own frailty. Only tender love will save us from the snares of the accuser (cf. Rev 12:10). That is why it is so important to encounter God’s mercy, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where we experience his truth and tenderness. Paradoxically, the evil one can also speak the truth to us, yet he does so only to condemn us. We know that God’s truth does not condemn, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us. That truth always presents itself to us like the merciful father in Jesus’ parable (cf. Lk 15:11-32). It comes out to meet us, restores our dignity, sets us back on our feet and rejoices for us, for, as the father says: “This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found” (v. 24).

Even through Joseph’s fears, God’s will, his history and his plan were at work. Joseph, then, teaches us that faith in God includes believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture.



**The window depicting
St Joseph with the child
Jesus, found in the
clerestory level in the
Basilica-Cathedral of St
John the Baptist, St John’s
In 1891, this window was
crafted in Beauvais, France
by Louis Lichtenfeld-Koch.**

Click [here](#) for an English translation of *Patris Corde*