

Homily.2OrdB.1.17.21
St. Bernard Church
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There are some familiar expressions that we commonly hear, especially when we're young, about our future.

“What do you want to be when you grow up?”

“Follow your dreams.”

“You can do anything you put your mind to.”

In today's readings, we hear about the call of Samuel, Andrew and Simon Peter.

I wonder what Samuel, Andrew and Simon Peter wanted and expected to do with their lives when they became adults. What were their dreams, before God called them?

The first three times the Lord called Samuel, Samuel didn't even know who was calling him.

From the Gospel, we learn that Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist. But he certainly never expected that he would meet the Messiah in person, and that he and his brother Simon Peter would become disciples of Jesus.

So what would you do if the Lord called you, like he did Samuel, Andrew and Peter?

What would that do for your plans for your future?

That's actually a trick question, because the truth is that Jesus is calling you, whether you know it or not.

When we say the Creed at Mass, we say these words: “I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.”

What does “apostolic” mean?

We might think it means that the Church is founded upon the apostles and that our priests are successors to the apostles. And that would be right.

But saying that the Church is apostolic has an additional meaning that most of us are probably not aware of.

The Church has always taught that all members of the Church, that's you and me, share in the apostolic character of the Church, that we are sent out into the world to spread the kingdom of Jesus over all the earth.

The Church teaches that the impact we will have in our apostolic mission will depend on the depth of our union with Christ and on the gifts that each of us receives from the Holy Spirit.

You and I are, by our Baptisms, by our membership in the Church, called to be disciples of Jesus. What does it mean to be a disciple?

A disciple of Jesus is someone who decides to follow Jesus completely.

In the words of Saint John Paul II, a disciple has made a personal decision to give their entire life to God, to have a personal relationship with God.

A disciple, like Andrew and Peter, discovers Jesus, gets to know Him and love Him. Then they commit to follow Him. Then they commit to share their relationship with Jesus with others. Spreading faith in Jesus becomes their mission.

Where does Jesus fit into our lives, into our futures?

Saint John Paul gives this answer:

“It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness. He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for a compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your heart your most genuine choices that others try to stifle.

It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.”

You don't have to quit school or quit your job to be a disciple. Jesus wants you to be a disciple wherever he leads you, which for most of us will mean doing something pretty normal.

The key is for each of us to have an influence, an impact with the people that we encounter in our lives, to communicate in some way the life that Jesus has given us and that is also available to them.

It's no secret that the world today is a very confused place. There is increasing confusion and division about how the country should be run. There is even confusion in the Church. The confusion, alienation and dysfunction in our culture are leading to more and more depression, anxiety, stress and addiction.

The answer, the solution, to all of these problems, is Jesus Christ: His love, His mercy, His forgiveness, His truth and His grace.

It's not someone else's job to bring Jesus to the people you know. It's your job. It's my job to bring Jesus to the people I know.

Nobody else can do what God created you to do. You are a unique, unrepeatable human being. God gave you your life, gave you your intelligence, your concern for others, your specific talents, to bring Jesus to the people he has brought into your life. That can be anywhere, at work, at school, at play and especially in your own home.

Down the road, we'll talk more about how to effectively share our faith with others.

What I just want to emphasize today is that we are all called to be disciples.

Our biggest problem is that we don't even know we're supposed to be disciples. And because of that, almost all of us are late for work.