

A Reflection John 1: 35 -42

- Can you think of a time in your life when you were called to something new and different and exciting? Maybe it was getting married or starting your family. Maybe it was a new job, or you were accepted into that school you really wanted to go to. Or maybe you were chosen for a sports team or to be in a play or a club at school. Remember that feeling of starting out. You had ideas and hopes and dreams about what it was going to be like.
- I can remember my very first job as an usher at Radio City Music Hall. I was excited about working at this historic theater. There were wonderful movies and concerts and shows to see and free tickets. You got to wear really cool uniforms and tuxedos for special events. I looked forward to being part of something big and glamorous and fun. And it was.
- But we also learned something else about these new and exciting experiences.
- A new job might require different training, longer hours. New schools come with homework, papers and exams. Teams and plays and clubs require practice and rehearsals. Marriage requires budgets and adjustments to the living habits of each other.
- At Radio City ushers were not permitted to sit down so you stood up on post for 6-7 hours. At the end of each show you walked through the theater with garbage bags cleaning up the mess under the seats.
- Calls to new and exciting things are great but they can come with not so glamorous parts, challenging moments and at times hard work we didn't expect.
- I kind of think it was like this for those fisherman Jesus called to be his first disciples. It had to be exciting. They had to think it was cool. They'd be part of Jesus' inner circle. I'm sure they each had their own ideas and hopes about what it was going to be like to be "Fishers of

Men”. And they **too** learned quickly this exciting new call would come with challenges and hard work.

- There are many voices in our world that call out to us, which lure us to worldly things like products and wealth and power. Today’s readings remind us not to close our minds (or hearts) to the most important voice, the most important call: “Jesus’ call to be His disciple”
- It’s a call we see Jesus make personally to Peter and the two other disciples in our Gospel reading today. They ask Jesus where is He staying? And Jesus replies “Come and see”. It’s a call we have seen Jesus make throughout history long after He no longer walked the earth, to people who heard the call and said yes with life changing results.
- Today, in our Gospel we here Jesus’ special call to Peter. Peter was to lead the Church on earth after Jesus’ ascension into heaven. Why Peter? What did Jesus see in Peter? Certainly Peter wasn’t perfect. We know Peter tried to discourage Jesus from washing his feet at the last supper. Peter told Jesus the idea of going to Jerusalem to preach and risk arrest was a crazy idea. Peter fled when Jesus was arrested. Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. Does this sound like the “Rock” that would lead Jesus’ Church?
- But **Jesus saw something different**. Luckily, Jesus can read hearts. Jesus looked at Peter and saw a man with a good heart. An honest man. A man who listened and could be taught truths. A man, who, once he knew the truth, would give his all to teach and defend those truths. A man who learned from his mistakes and was not afraid to admit he was wrong. A man who loved God and was so open to God’s will that God could work through him. Effort, desire and dedication – that’s what Jesus saw in Peter. Even if Peter didn’t see it in himself at first. So Jesus called Peter.

- Jesus call is a powerful call and it is a constant call. He called those in the past. He calls us today. He will call our children and their children.
- As we see in both our first reading and in today's Gospel reading, sometimes we don't readily hear God's call; sometimes we don't recognize that it is God's voice that is calling us.
- Sometimes we need someone to help us recognize God's call to us – as Eli did for Samuel in today's first reading, as John the Baptist did for those disciples in today's Gospel reading.
- Sometimes we need to remember Jesus sees something in us –even if we cant see it.
- On this Sunday our Church asks each of us to spend some time thinking about God's call to us. Are we listening close enough? Do we hear God's call to us through people and events in our life? Is there someone in our life that helps us to recognize God's call? His call to be His disciple – to come and see what He has planned for us. To think about what's involved in that call and how to answer it.
- In our Gospel those first disciples asked Jesus “where are you staying?” They may have been expecting Jesus' to name a town or region or neighborhood. But when Jesus invited them to “come see” Jesus wasn't inviting them to a place; He was inviting them to a new way of life – a ministry. Where was Jesus staying? With His people – among the poor, the needy, those on the fringe of society, those who need God's love and healing. Jesus was “staying” focused on God's will.
- Peter and the other disciples called that day answered the call. They gave God top priority. Put God ahead of everything else in their life. **Jesus call to us is the same**. No relationship is to be more important; not father, mother, wife, husband, or child. No career or work is more important than doing God's will.

- This can be hard for us to hear. You might be thinking right now “that’s impossible, I can’t do it”. That reaction is normal, we are used to giving ourselves completely to our loved ones (especially our children)
- But get past that first reaction. Really think about it. **Putting God first**. It’s not that hard and it makes perfect sense. **Everything we have**, the people, the things in our lives is given to us as a gift, from God. **It all comes from Him**. How could we not love Him most for providing us with these things we cherish?
- Think about it, when we put God first, spend time with God and listen for His voice- What does He really tell us:
- I love you dearly, you are precious to me. You are my children. Go and love each other. Use the gifts and talents I have given you to make life better for each other. Bring my love to everyone and lead them to me. Help them know me. I know it will be hard work at times – but I will be there with you.
- That’s exactly what Jesus was telling everyone when He said in our Gospel today: “come and see”.
- Nothing suffers or is neglected when we put God first. It only gets better. Better than we could hope or dream for. It’s not losing anything- it’s gaining everything. That is what we are called to when Jesus calls us to be His disciples.
- The real challenge for us is figuring out how to live out our response to Jesus call in our day-to-day lives. It starts by recognizing **that** the opportunities to bring God’s love and to lead others closer to God are most often right in front of us. Our marriages, our families, our friends, our jobs, our Church – these are the places we live out our call to be disciples. St. Therese wrote, “Grow where you are planted”.
- Once we recognize this we need to actually do something each day. We need to do what Jesus did. He went preaching, teaching and healing every day.

- We can preach, tell people about God. How wonderful and loving He is. Tell others our personal stories of how God helped you or someone you know. We all have these stories, preaching means sharing them.
- We can **teach: Showing** God's love in action. We learn best by watching others do it. We can be kind, patient, **choose good words**, be honest, hard working, and humble. We can invite others to come join us at Mass and Holy Eucharist.
- We live among thousands of people, we know hundreds. They watch us, learn from us, and form opinions about us. There are countless ways to teach them about God and His love by our actions.
- We can be **healers**: We can do something each day to change someone's life for the better. There are hundreds of ways to do this. Maybe a career in medicine or counseling, the priesthood, religious life- all healing vocations. Visiting the sick and homebound, giving food to those who are hungry.
- There are people with no hopes, no dreams. People struggling with depression – we can talk and listen and be there. We can encourage them, pray with them. All are ways to bring God's healing love. All do-able.
- Answering Jesus' call to be a disciple means really, really seeing yourself in this role of bringing Christ to others, letting Jesus **use you** to reveal His presence in the world. As Peter did.
- Whether you're a priest, deacon, husband wife, parent, child, religious – whatever. Being a disciple of Jesus means to **live that life with a passion**, a **fire**, a **purpose** of being God's presence in the world.

