

"THE CALL"

In today's Gospel, Jesus proclaimed, with all the authority of the God-Head, that the Kingdom of God was at hand and personally present to the Apostles. The promise of divine deliverance made to Abraham, and all the prophets was now fulfilled in their hearing! In the first part of today's Gospel, Jesus first called them to holiness and repentance, so that they might have greater faith and trust in Him. Then in the second part Jesus called them to service, to share in His own ministry of salvation for to mankind, simply by saying, "Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And their responses were instantaneous and unconditional, for the Gospel states, "They abandoned their nets and followed Him."

What was it about Jesus' call, that so inspired, so influenced, so prompted them to abruptly abandon their livelihood, their nets and boats, their families, and friends, to follow Him? What was it about Jesus' call that caused them to forsake everything they had known, only to share in a most uncertain and doubtful future? For Jesus' invitation did not describe exactly what they were to face, and was remarkably brief, simply, "Come follow me!"

And yet, they did! What could have possibly overcome them? What were they thinking about, when suddenly they were launched into an entirely new state of life? A whole new world they had never experienced before. A whole new condition that would frequently challenge and endanger them, marked by constant sacrifices, heartbreaks, and violent treatment!

For the Apostles, after all, were only poor fishermen, representing the lowest ranks of society, totally uneducated and unskilled - And yet they were suddenly propelled into a whole new, dynamic world, sharing in events that no man had ever dreamed of. Even more remarkably, they immediately responded to Jesus' call despite the fact, they no idea who Jesus was or where He came from. And because Jesus' call occurred very early in His earthly ministry,

they probably had never heard Him speak, or listened to His profound wisdom, or witnessed His remarkable deeds, or His miracles.

Therefore, if it wasn't His compelling and persuasive teachings, or His wisdom, or His wondrous deeds or miracles, what then was it? To totally submit to such extraordinary action, the Apostles had to have been completely overcome by an enormously powerful force! Overcome by a force previously unknown to mankind. And that force, which so mysteriously and powerfully influenced their responses, was nothing less than the INTIMATE, OVERWHELMING AND TOTALLY IRRESTIBLE PERSONAL PRESENCE OF ALMIGHTY GOD, HIMSELF, made visible to them in the humanity of Jesus! All it took, was for Jesus to look into their eyes and say, "come follow me!" You see, in that very brief encounter, Jesus commanded all of the power and all of the majesty of the eternal God-Head. In one instant, Jesus moved all of the powers of heaven and earth by His sweet and gentle voice.

And the minds and hearts of the Apostles couldn't resist Jesus' engaging, all-powerful and compelling will! They would now become, by the grace of God, fishers of men! Furthermore, as they previously cast their nets into the sea to entrap fish, to nourish their families and communities, so now they would cast their spiritual nets into the whole world, to nourish and captivate the hearts and minds of all humanity!

Finally, as Jesus was personally present to the Apostles, so too, Jesus is now personally present to all of us, in the most Blessed Sacrament. And as He so persuasively called His Apostles to holiness and then to service, so now, He calls each one of us, "Come follow me!" And like the Apostles, our own responses and commitment should be just as immediate, just as complete! He calls us today to His service, to be His instruments to bring His love, His forgiveness, and His salvation to all mankind, to the praise and glory of God, the Father. Amen.

God Bless you all.