

Fr. John Sassani
Homily Given on January 18, 2009
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Liturgical Year B

All of us have encountered unexpected circumstances in our lives. Fr. Sean McGraw, away for the holidays, expected to be back last Tuesday but, because of bad weather in South Bend and here, he is coming back now, five days later.

Some unexpected circumstances create opportunity. I married a couple a few years ago who met at the airplane gate for a snow-delayed flight. The lengthening time led to conversation that led to follow-up phone calls, subsequent meetings, and eventually marriage.

Something like that happens in today's Gospel. John the Baptist is there with two of his disciples and points toward Jesus. It's four o'clock in the afternoon of the Sabbath, a day of restricted travel. But the disciples go and see. They spend a whole day with Jesus unexpectedly and never go back. What seems like happenstance becomes a life-changing experience.

Something like that has happened to us – perhaps because of the family we were born into. Or it may be that one parent was Catholic or a future spouse was Catholic or a person of influence was a Catholic. But these circumstances became the opportunity for Christ to touch your life. For me, the unexpected circumstance was a high school retreat. The Brother who gave the retreat used this text: "Come and see." I heard it referring to my question, "Should I become a priest?" I went and saw...and I discovered not only a vocation as a priest but a vocation as a follower of Christ.

The Gospel says that the disciples asked, "Where are you staying?" and that they stayed with Jesus. "Stayed" is a very passive word. The Greek word is "abiding" or "remaining" – it is an active verb, the verb that describes the relationship of the Father and the Son and the relationship of the Father and Son and the disciple. The unexpected circumstances led to a life-long and life-altering experience.

Christ is constantly asking us, "What are you looking for?" Christ constantly invites us, "Come and see." And, when we do, we find what we need.

What is your disciple story? What were the unexpected circumstances that prompted your following and abiding with Christ?

You may have the occasion, like John the Baptist, to point to Christ, to be the unexpected circumstance for others. We need to be ready!