

## SESSION 3: COME, FOLLOW BEHIND ME

### COMMIT - DAY 1: Calling of the Apostles

After his baptism in the Jordan and forty days in the desert, Jesus returns to Galilee, taking the next step for this mission. At the Sea of Galilee, he calls several fishermen, Saint Peter (Simon), Andrew, James, and John, to come and follow him. Saint Mark gives a striking account of this first encounter with Jesus. Jesus passes by and they immediately follow.

Mark's account is dramatic, and quick. The other evangelists fill in the details for us. St. John's Gospel (John 2:35-45) presents a chain of evangelization. Andrew and John begin as disciples of John the Baptist, who points them to Jesus. After meeting Jesus, Andrew goes to tell his brother Peter. And so it goes, with one disciple attracting another to Jesus through personal testimony.

In St. Luke's Gospel, Peter's relationship with Jesus develops with several encounters. First, Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law (Lk 4:38-39). Then in Luke 5:1-11, Jesus teaches from Peter's boat, giving Peter a front row seat from which to hear the Lord's words. After that, Jesus has Peter put out for an unlikely fishing trip, with wildly successful results. Jesus's words and deeds have a profound effect on Peter, who goes from addressing Jesus as "Master" to falling on his knees and proclaiming, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Only then does Luke report the famous invitation to become "fishers of men."

What elements of the various accounts of Jesus's calling of the disciples resonate with your experience of coming to Jesus?

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Even in its abbreviated form, Mark's account of the call of the disciples emphasizes an important point. With his narrative, we sense the compelling nature of Christ's call. Jesus is "passing by." Our life is short – shorter than we like to think. And during this life, we come up against the perennial question that men and women of every age ask: "What is man?" "What follows the earthly life?" and "What is the relationship between God and man?" A decision about how we live our lives, who we follow, shouldn't be put off. Jesus passes by and calls us to follow him, for only he provides the most adequate answer to the deepest questions of our heart (*see Gaudium et Spes, especially nos 10, 19 and 41*).

Reflect on how Our Lord is calling you. He calls every one of us, daily. Pray to our Lady, the perfect disciple, for her intercession to help you respond wholeheartedly in the midst of your daily tasks to "follow behind" Jesus.

### COMMIT - DAY 2: Casting Out an Unclean Spirit

Yesterday we considered Jesus's call of the disciples by the Sea of Galilee. Today we look at where Jesus goes next: "And they went to Capernaum," the hometown of Peter and Andrew. And on the Sabbath they enter the synagogue, and Jesus drives out an "unclean" spirit, a demon.

Jesus's mission on earth is to free us from sin and death, and no one has more to lose from Jesus's victory than the devil himself. Satan shows up at the very beginning of Mark's Gospel, tempting Jesus three times in the wilderness before Jesus even begins his Galilean ministry (see Mark 1:13). Jesus is victorious in the desert, but this doesn't stop Satan and his demons – driving out demons is to be a mark of Jesus's ministry. Just as he is victorious against Satan in the desert, over and over again, as he confronts the unclean spirits, he victoriously frees God's children under the devil's possession.

Look up the following verses when Mark records Jesus's ongoing confrontations with unclean spirits.

	<b>What happens in each passage?</b>
Mark 1:23-26	
Mark 1:32-34	
Mark 1:39	
Mark 3:11-12	
Mark 3:13-15 (Apostles)	
Mark 5:1-14	
Mark 6:7-13 (Apostles)	
Mark 7:25-30	
Mark 9:17-29	

In an exorcism, one names the demon who is being exorcised. Using the name is a way of controlling and exorcising authority over the demon. Knowing the name gives power over that spirit. We see this in the encounter in Mark 5:9, where Jesus specifically commands the demon to say his name. But demons aren't docile. They disobey as much as they can. When our Lord asks the name of the unclean spirit in Mark 5:9, it evades the question. The unclean spirit's attempt to evade the exorcism in Mark 1:24 fails. Jesus is in complete control. He works "with authority," rebukes the demon, and commands him to "be silent." And the demon absolutely opposed to Christ's purpose.

When the devil would tempt us to lose heart and turn away from God, we should make use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to repent of any sins, draw on God's grace to do as Jesus commands, and put our full trust in the authority of Jesus's words.

**COMMIT - DAY 3: LECTIO: A LONELY PLACE**

**LECTIO:** The practice of praying with Scripture begins with an active and close reading of the Scripture passage. Read the verse below and then answer the questions to take a closer look at some of the details of the passage.

*“And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him followed him, and they found him and said to him, ‘Everyone is searching for you.’ And he said to them, ‘Let us go to the next towns, that I may preach there also; for that is why I came out.’ And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.”*

- Mark 1:35-39

In verse 35, Saint Mark states the time of day two different ways. At what time does this take place?

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Where does Jesus go?

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What does Jesus do?

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**MEDITATIO:** *Lectio*, a close reading and rereading is followed by *meditation*, a time to reflect on the Scripture passage and to ponder the reasons for particular events, descriptions, details, phrases, and even echoes from other Scripture passages that were noticed during *lectio*. Take some time now to meditate on the above verse.

*In our time we are taken up with so many activities and duties, worries and problems: we often tend to fill all of the spaces of the day, without leaving a moment to pause and reflect and to nourish our spiritual life, contact with God. Mary teaches us how necessary it is to find in our busy day, moments for silent recollection, to meditate on what the Lord wants to teach us, on how he is present and active in the world and in our life: to be able to stop for a moment and meditate. St Augustine compares meditation on the mysteries of God to the assimilation of food and uses a verb that recurs throughout the Christian tradition, “to ruminate”; that is, the mysteries of God should continually resonate within us so that they become familiar to us, guide our lives and nourish us, as does the food we need to sustain us. St Bonaventure, moreover, with reference to the words of Sacred Scripture, says that “they should always be ruminated upon so as to be able to gaze on them with ardent application of the soul.” To meditate, therefore, means to create within us a situation of recollection, of inner silence, in order to reflect upon and assimilate the mysteries of our faith and what God is working within us; and not merely on the things that come and go.(Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, Aug. 27,2011)*

Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that even in the midst of our activities, we must leave time for prayer. Jesus himself shows us this important lesson. The Savior of the world was on the most important mission in the world’s history, yet he often went off to a lonely place to pray. Where is your lonely place that you go to be with the Lord? How can you make time, or increase time, for prayer?

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Saint Mark tells us that Saint Peter and the disciples “who followed” Jesus “found him.” The disciples find Jesus while he is in prayer. Jesus wants us to find him also, to find him and meet him in our prayer. What Scripture, or mysteries of the faith, has God put on your heart today “to ruminate” over, so that Our Lord can meet you and guide your life?

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**ORATIO, CONTEMPLATIO, RESOLUTIO:** Having read and meditates on today’s Scripture passage, take some time to pray – bringing your thoughts to God (*oratio*) – and to be receptive to God’s grace in silence (*contemplation*). Then end your prayer by making a simple concrete resolution (*resolution*) to respond to God’s prompting of you heart in today’s prayer.

**COMMIT - DAY 4: Gathering God’s People**

For God’s people, the early days of the Davidic kingdom were a high-water mark. God himself described King David as “a man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14). Word of Solomon’s wisdom attracted foreign dignitaries from among the other nations to travel to his court with tribute. The glorious Temple on Mount Zion stood as a testament to Israel’s God and the unique covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people.

But sadly, God’s people let their hearts go astray after the false gods of the nations around them. They built altars and worshipped idols of stone and wood, forsaking the one true God who had blessed them so abundantly. As a result, the Lord allowed his people to be scattered among the nations, exiled from the Promised Land.

Before the exile came to pass, the prophets repeatedly called God’s people to repentance and warned of their coming destruction and exile, but these calls landed on deaf ears. As the exile approached, the prophets’ warnings also included a message of hope, a promise that when God’s people found themselves in exile and turned back to him, God himself would regather his people, heal their wounds, and bring them home.

As we read the prophets, with their numerous predictions of destruction and death, it is easy to miss this theme of regathering. But if we look closely, we find the concept and image of gathering repeatedly used throughout the prophets. Look up the following verses and fill in the chart.

	<b>Who is gathering?</b>	<b>Who is being gathered?</b>	<b>From where?</b>
Isaiah 11:12			
Isaiah 43:5			
Isaiah 54:5-7			

Jeremiah 31:1-14			
Ezekiel 11:15-17			

The remnant that returned to the Promised Land looked for this regathering. In anticipation they named their local places of public prayer synagogues, from the Greek word for “gathering.” The local synagogue, where the Torah was read, taught, and preached from was a place where God’s people awaited, and began to experience, the regathering promised by God.

*A synagogue is different from the Temple. It is a place where people come together to study the Torah. Even though the Temple is destroyed, Jewish people still gather in synagogues today.*

It is significant then that Mark uses the word “gather sever times in the opening chapters of his Gospel.

Mark 1:33	“And the whole city was <b>gathered</b> together about the door.”
Mark 2:2	“And many were <b>gathered</b> together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them.”
Mark 2:13	“He went out again beside the sea; and all the crowd <b>gathered</b> about him, and he taught them.”

Jesus uses Peter’s house as a home base, and about the door of Peter’s house many gathered, an indication that the future Church and Body of Christ, founded upon Peter, will be the place of gathering around the Lord, the place we enter into through Baptism, and in which we gather around the table of the Lord at the Eucharist.

Jesus’s preaching calls the people together. He goes about like a shepherd, finding the injured and sich and healing them. And yet, he is not imposing himself. Rather, the people freely choose to come to him. Jesus’s power and compassion draw people to him. This provides a good examination of conscience: *Am I approachable, like Jesus? Am I a source of reunion? Is my family a place wher people are treated with mercy and truth? How can I be a help, not a hindrance, for others to be gathered about the Lord?*

**COMMIT – DAY 5: Truth and Beauty**

***The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew***

*By Duccio de Buoninsegna, c. 1308-1311, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*

Born in Siena, Duccio de Buoninsegna was an Italian painter and founder of the Sienese school. While much is debated about his life, and where and with whom he studied, his artistic ability brought

him fame already during his life.

Duccio lived in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and one of the premier masterpieces of this time was his *Maesta*, a two-sided altarpiece that decorated the main altar of Siena’s cathedral for nearly 200 years. *Maesta* is the Italian word for “majesty,” the work taking its name for the front central image of the Virgin Mary and the child Jesus enthroned in majesty, with rows of angels and saints around the throne.



The back side of the *Maesta* contained numerous images from the life and Passion of Christ. *The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew* was one of the images from this back side of the *Maesta* altarpiece.

In *The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew*, Duccio presents the two brothers, Peter (then named Simon) and Andrew, in their boat on the Sea of Galilee. Look up Mark 1:16. What does Jesus see as he passes by the Sea of Galilee?

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Simon and Andrew have just thrown their net into the sea. Lowered into the water, it fills with fish, soon ready to be hauled into the boat. Duccio gives us the moment when in the midst of their work Jesus appears on the shore, looks directly at Peter, and extends his hand in invitation. We can almost hear his words, “Follow me.” Duccio presents the naturalness of the scene, the details of the net and the fish, and the dialogue presented in the natural gesture of our Lord and Saint Peter.

Jesus is clothed in a traditional tunic and robe/cloak. These two pieces of clothing are painted in two distinct colors, typical in Byzantine art and iconography – the red tunic, representing Jesus’s divinity, covered by a blue robe/cloak, representing his humanity – pictorially presenting God made man.

Take a moment to journal your ideas, questions, or insights about this lesson. Write down thoughts you had that may not have been mentioned in the text or the discussion questions. List any personal applications you gained from the lessons. What challenged you the most in the teachings? How might you turn what you’ve learned into specific action?

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