

FROM FR. CHRIS ALIMAJI'S DESK

*Reflections on the Call to Discipleship 2021 (Part 2)*

On this Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, January 24, 2021 the Lord continues to call more disciples for ministries. The Scripture Readings are Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20; and our Song of Praise is Psalm 25.

Who is a disciple? This is a very necessary question. Let me attempt it, in our context, by saying that a disciple is a follower of Christ. One who is taught by Jesus to continue the mission of Christ, is a disciple. One who accepted baptism and adoption in the sonship of Christ as a child of God, a Christian and a fellow worshipper in the pattern of the sacrifice of Christ in union with his Church in the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father, deserves the title disciple. St. Peter advised: "Therefore, brothers, be all the more eager to make your call and election firm, for, in doing so, you will never stumble." (2 Pt., 1:10).

At various points in our lives the Lord called you and I to become his disciples in readiness for ministries. Some of us still remember the place and time or moment of their call, or what they were doing, or the circumstances surrounding their invitation or enlightenment, (cf. Samuel, Jonah, Andrew, Philip, Peter, James and John). Each apostle had his moment of encounter with the Lord and that registered in their lives. I deem it very necessary that we recollect at what moment in our lives we encountered the Lord in a specific or vivid manner. I assure you it will surely transform you. It is a revelation that keeps on manifesting itself in various shapes and forms, some vivid, some unclear like Samuel's or Peter's. They often require guidance from someone else. Sometimes it is really intriguing. As for me, the Lord invited me repeatedly in dreams, in my desires, in loving things about my religious worship, in stories of my being, in my inclinations in life, etc. Each encounter was enriching, enlightening, transforming and inviting; you name it! After saying "yes" by accepting priestly ordination when it was offered to me, it has taken new forms such as visions, trances and inner voices, to consolidate the call. There were times I hesitated, and he passed me by. Those moments the call or request was unclear to me.

Permit me to dialogue with you a little. What were your own personal encounters with the Lord? How were they like? God called Samuel in the middle of the night, and guided by the priest Eli, he finally responded, "Speak, for your servant is listening." (1 Sam. 3:10). The disciples of John the Baptist were listening when John pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." (Jn 1:35-42). They in turn went and called Peter after spending time with Jesus and got convinced he is the Messiah, and Peter too got his personal encounter. It is an interesting story to read. Even when you do not actually verbalize your response to the Lord, you have responded to that same invitation and have been walking the journey of discipleship. You may have also been engaged in some works of discipleship otherwise called ministries. You may have actualized your vocation to the priesthood, religious life or lay life, with their variations. The important point now is, how are you carrying out your convinced ministry? Or do you have doubts regarding your calling? What are you doing to intensify your engagement in the mission of Christ? How is your personal relationship with Christ as your Lord and Savior? You must always find time to reflect on who you are in relation to Christ. As for me, I got more clarifications while in personal prayers, at ministry works in church, at Bible Studies, group prayer meetings, during the seminary prayers and during meditations and adorations. As it is

written, “deep calls to deep,” (Ps. 42-43:7 [8]), when you involve yourself in deep and meditative prayers. At such moments you are joined to the Lord and you become one with the Spirit, (cf. 1 Cor. 6:17). That is the moment of revelation of who you are, a temple of the Holy Spirit, purchased by Christ, and what you are called to do in Christ Jesus, (cf. 1 Cor. 6:13-20). Teenagers and young adults must spend time in prayer with Jesus to discover their true calling in life, before embarking on any serious business or profession. I believe that every Christian called to ministry or apostolate has moments of encounter. At those moments, like Socrates, you shout *eureka! I have it!* It shakes you up and all unclarity falls apart, giving way to your true vocation, your call to discipleship.