

3rd. Sunday in Ordinary Time January 24, 2021

What if, one day, out of the blue, someone you did not know, came by your house, knocked on your door, and said “Hey, come follow me.” What would your reaction be?

Can you imagine dropping everything, leaving everything you own, where you live, your car, your cell phone and following someone who said “come, follow me.” Would you be able to do it? What would hold you back? Most definitely fear! Fear of the unknown, fear of leaving behind all the comforts of home, fear of not knowing when and where your next meal might be or where you were going to sleep at night!

Yet, this is what Simon and his brother Andrew did, along with James and John. “And Jesus said to them, “Come follow me and I will make you fishers of people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him.” The word “immediately” jumps out at me. There was no hesitation on the part of Simon, Andrew, James or John. They stopped what they were doing immediately! Simon and Andrew were out fishing. They left behind the nets, the boat, the catch of the day and went with Jesus. James and John were mending nets and left their father Zebedee and followed Jesus.

What would make these new disciples drop everything and follow Jesus? Jesus must have possessed some great charisma! Perhaps. The message Jesus preached, an invitation to repent and believe in the good news, must have been very appealing. Jesus gave them a new job description to be “fishers of people.” Would it have been possible for them to understand what this meant?

The invitation from Jesus to repent and believe in the Good News is still offered to each and everyone of us! Think about it. The invitation is there for you to follow Jesus and you do not have to leave behind everything you have. What holds you back? For me, not so much the fear of the unknown but the fear of letting Jesus be in control always! The remedy for fear is not bravery but trust. To be able to say yes to “follow me” is to let go. Let go of all that worries you and give it all over to Jesus. Fear says “stay with what is familiar.” Fear says “I need to be in control of all things at all times.” Love overcomes fear. To love unconditionally is not easy. To allow ourselves to be loved unconditionally is even more of a challenge.

How will you respond to “come, follow me.” Each of us will hear the call differently than the next person. We all have different vocations in life, travel different roads spiritually and we move at different speeds. Perhaps, during this time of lockdown when our movements are restricted, this time can become a time of spiritual renewal. Think about what holds you back. Perhaps you feel you do not have the words or enough knowledge about your faith to be comfortable talking to others about why you are a follower of Jesus. Maybe you feel your prayer life is inadequate. Whatever it is that you perceive as a stumbling block, do not be afraid. Ask Jesus for help and it will be there. Remember, he loves us even when we cannot love ourselves. Dare to dream! Dare to imagine! Dare to follow!

Reflection by Julie de Gouw, Pastoral Minister