

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Third Sunday after the Epiphany – January 24, 2021

“Follow me and I will make you fish for people. And immediately they left their nets and followed him.” – Mark 1:17-18

I remember the day I told my parents as if it were yesterday. I was excited, nervous, and anxious to get it over with. After all, how exactly does one tell their parents they are going to spend the rest of their life serving God in ministry? In my case, at that time, in the convent. My mother cried, and they were not tears of joy. My dad was just silent on the other end of the phone, and when he finally did speak, he said, “YOU? A NUN?”

How naïve I was to think that this call from God was something people would embrace and rejoice over. Little did I understand their apprehension. I thought it was because they thought I was too young, or too unsettled, or maybe just not good enough. But this call from God was not of my choosing, and it wasn't something I could just simply ignore, because when God calls us, His voice doesn't just go away. We can run, but we can't hide.

Today's first lesson from Jonah proves my point. He DOES try to run from God because he doesn't like the people he was being called to, and so he split. But God caught up with him and used him anyway, and the people of Nineveh heard God's word of repentance and were saved.

The disciples are called in Mark's text today to become fishers of people. Now, while it's true that they left immediately and followed him, it's later on in their ministry that they have troubles with their commitment, and they all eventually abandon Jesus in his most needy time. Why? Because following God is a tough and messy business. It's difficult on the best of days, and downright terrifying on the worst. Maybe that's why my mom cried when I told her, and my dad was in disbelief. Perhaps they didn't think I could be strong enough for what lie ahead. And they are right. None of us can be strong enough for what God asks of us. We would be foolish to think otherwise. But, when God calls us, he also gives us all that we need to do His work here on earth.

Have you ever noticed your name in the church directory? It's there because you are a part of your congregation and its ministry. In fact, you, too, have been called. Called to live out your Baptism. Called to share your gifts. So, what do you say? Want to go fishing?

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