

From The Pastor

Usually, we do not come to, or find Jesus all by ourselves. Someone points us to Jesus by what they say, how they act, or by an inner peace we perceive in them. Faith is handed on by word of mouth, or hand to hand. If we have come to the practice of religion by the generational faith of our parents, we still need a personal awakening to Jesus beyond the rituals of religion.

Who brought you to Jesus? How did you come to know him, and who was it that inspired your interest and desire for Him? Presuming your answers to these questions are informed and effective, whom do you bring to Jesus? Having received Jesus and his truth through your faith, with whom do you share your faith that others may come to Jesus as well?

The 'John' referred to in today's gospel is John the Baptist, not John the evangelist who wrote the gospel. Today's passage follows the testimony of John the Baptist about his role and purpose. His role was to announce the coming of the Lord, and his purpose was to point him out when he came. John admits he is not the Messiah, and that he did not at first even recognize Jesus who he was suppose to reveal. When Jesus is revealed to John, he fulfills his role and points him out.

Speaking to two of his disciples, John proclaims as he sees Jesus pass by: 'Behold, the Lamb of God'. With these words, John points his own disciples to Jesus. Feeling the impact of the words, they are attracted to Jesus, and they follow him. John has fulfilled his role. He believed in Jesus, and then he pointed Him out to others.

The following interlude sets the pattern of coming to know and follow Jesus. Sensing the two disciples, Jesus asks, 'What are you looking for?' In other words, what is your desire with me? Why do you seek me? The reply comes, 'Rabbi, where are you staying?' Jesus knows this to mean, we want to know you and spend time with you. More deeply, the two are asking; who are you and what are you all about?

The reply of Jesus is swift and clear: 'Come and see'. Jesus invites them into his place of residence as well as his inner self. Yes, he says, come and see who I am, follow me and you will find what you are seeking. What they are seeking is exactly what Jesus has to offer them. This is a self to self, heart to heart encounter, and the two disciples are all ears. More than an invitation to become friends and do fun stuff together, these early disciples are looking for truth and they find it in Jesus.

How did they know they were looking for truth? What drew them to follow Jesus at John's suggestion? 'Behold, the Lamb of God.' This catch phrase told Andrew and his companion that Jesus was more than just another man. These were good Jews who practiced the ritual sacrifice of lambs for the atonement of sins. To see a man who was identified as the Lamb of God would stir their hearts with curiosity and desire. They were seeking truth and Jesus was the truth they were seeking.

They go and stay with him for the remainder of the day. What did they talk about? What questions were asked, and what answers did Jesus give? In first addressing Jesus, he is called Rabbi. A Rabbi is a teacher, and teachers teach. I suspect these 'students' asked whatever questions came to mind and Jesus was more than pleased to satisfy their hearts desire. Doesn't this sound inviting? These two disciples must have been mesmerized, with their hearts on fire as they listened to Jesus.

Clearly, these two men were inspired and gripped by the Truth with whom they were speaking. So much so that Andrew goes and tells his older brother Peter, 'we have found the Messiah'. This does not sound like a person who is unsure of himself. He was convincing enough to have the strong-minded Peter allow himself to be brought to Jesus. Obviously, it was a successful encounter because we know the life and love between Jesus and Peter.

Notice the pattern of evangelization and faith sharing. John recognizes Jesus and believes in Him. He points him out to others. These two others follow Jesus, and they come to believe in Him. They go and get another and bring him to Jesus. He (Peter) believes, leads many others to know and follow Jesus, and finally gives his life for the man who is the Lamb of God.

As a little aside, John the gospel writer (not John the Baptist) gives us the little detail that it was about four in the afternoon. Was it four o'clock when they first met Jesus, or when they took leave of him after their visit? The point is that four in the afternoon was the time for the ritual sacrifice of the lambs in the temple. John, the author, is pointing out Jesus as the new lamb of sacrifice who takes away the sin of the world. Now the old temple sacrifice is obsolete. The new stance of faith before the living God is a lively faith relationship with Jesus whose sacrifice takes away all sin.

Who has brought you to Jesus? Who turned you on to faith and helped you really know Jesus? If that gift has been given to you, who have you brought to Jesus, or invited to come to know Him as our truth and Messiah?