

**Call of the Disciple**    Third Sunday in Ordinary Time/A    January 22, 2017    8:15 AM  
Is 8:23—9:3;    1 Cor 1:10-13, 17;    **Mt 4:12-23**    (God is calling all of us in some way, and God will find us. What's needed is our generosity and our willingness to respond to what it is he asks of us.)

Today we hear a story about the call of the apostles, and like so many stories it's too familiar and so we don't get how odd it is. But it is odd because in Jesus' day like today **disciples or students went looking for their teachers.** Today if a young person in high school wants to go to college or university, he or she prepares grades, essays, and so on, and sends them on to the various institutions hoping to be accepted. It was very similar in Jesus' day when perspective disciples sought out teachers who then would pass judgment on whether they wanted them or not. Doubtlessly they had to pass some test: well, how good are you in Hebrew? How do you read this page here? But that's not what Jesus did.

Now could you imagine a young person, perhaps a senior in high school, being approached by a famous professor and being invited to become her student? "I want you to be my student; I'll even pay your tuition." How about that? Would that ever happen in our world? I doubt it, but it did happen in Jesus' day; that's what he did. **He went looking for his own students,** and he chose men that could not even read. And this is supposed to indicate **a monumental shift in the whole religious perspective. Religion is usually about us seeking God,** but this is not. **This is about God seeking us,** and that was Jesus' view. God is out there seeking us, and he wanted helpers, and he picked fishermen. He wanted to envelop people in the nets of God's love. **Fishermen** have some good qualities. They **have to be patient. They can't complain about long hours,** not if they are going to live by fishing. It's not a sport here. It's a way of life; it's a business. And Jesus is picking his helpers, his students, his disciples. And **he picks them from**

**this occupation because that says something about his view of God and what God is about in our world.**

Now the following is of course a rather painful situation. Can you imagine now what Andrew and Simon's father felt about his two sons leaving the family business? Was he pleased? I doubt it. What about the father Zebedee seeing his two sons leave the family business? Was he pleased? I doubt it. This is also true: **when God calls us into his nets, other people might be very displeased.** I experienced this in a small way when I told my family I wanted to try out the priesthood. They were not actually pleased. Eventually they came around to deciding that it was my life and if I wanted to ruin it, that was my business. Actually the opposite has also been true in the experience of my friends who later decided that priesthood was not for them, that wasn't really what God was calling them to. Sometimes their families really rejected them, which is actually proof that the whole so-called vocation they had was really a compulsion coming from their families and not a call from God at all. **So sometimes even our loved ones get in the way of what God is trying to do.** We have to be aware of this because the call of God, which comes to all of us at some point, **the call of God has to be answered.** And **that answer can cause friction and conflict,** as I have just said.

So what this gospel story is really trying to get us to believe is that **God is calling all of us in some way, and God will find us.** We don't have to go seeking God. We don't need to go to the mountaintop. If you can get away, that's nice, but you don't need to do that. **God will find you where you are, as he found the apostles fishing.** If you are a cook, he will find you cooking. If you are a seamstress, he will find you sewing. If you are a brick layer, he will find you mixing mortar. God finds us where we are. **What's needed is our generosity and our willingness to respond to what it is he asks of us.** That's the call of the disciple.