ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY January 26 & BEYOND

Casting Our Nets Elsewhere

In Matthew's Gospel the first four disciples that Jesus calls were two pairs of brothers. They used nets to catch fish in the Sea of Galilee and they made their livelihood out of that occupation. When Jesus calls the first two he makes the following invitation: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men". As strange as that invitation may have sounded, they did not hesitate to leave their nets and follow Jesus. We may wonder what made them leave their subsistence means behind to follow this stranger. Some have suggested they may have already heard about Jesus or even met Him before. Some have stressed the persuasive power of the Holy Spirit that filled Jesus as responsible for these men's prompt response. We do not know for certain, but we do know that this moment totally changed their lives.

We spend most of our lives trying to catch different things or even people. We try to catch the things that make our lives pleasant and comfortable. We try to catch positions that make us feel appreciated and "important". We try to have with us the people that will solve our problems, ease our minds, and stand by us when in trouble. In that sense, we are like fishermen casting nets all the time. Sometimes we get the "fish" we want. Other times we don't, and cast them again and again. The main purpose of those net castings is to satisfy our needs. It is a self-centered casting of nets. And no matter how full the net is, it never satisfies us.

Matthew's Gospel, on the other hand, points out to a different kind of net casting. It tells us to become fishers of people. The idea is to get people out of their ordinary

lives of self-centered, useless net casting, and take them to a different realm. When fish are taken from their aquatic medium to a terrestrial one, they simply die because they cannot make use of the oxygen in the air; they can only take it from the water. However, when people are "fished" in the sense that Jesus implies here, they are taken from a stifling form of self-centered life that cuts them off from the real source of abundant life--God's self-giving life--into a form of life that is centered in others, and is therefore much more like God's life itself.

It may seem paradoxical, but when we move away from ourselves and toward the rest of our fellow human beings and all creatures in general, we start to be connected to the Creator's intention, which is always loving and self-giving. Then we begin to feel the satisfaction that comes from the source, and the Kingdom of Heaven becomes a real possibility.

Matthew's Gospel is clear in this sense. Jesus' call to the first disciples starts with a radical change in net casting, and the last words in this Gospel, which have come to be known as The Great Commission, tell us to go and make disciples. It is not an easy task. People resist being taken out of what they think is their true life and onto the unknown. But Jesus has also given us a promise: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world". With His assurance, we can start to cast our nets elsewhere.

Fr, Carlos Expósito, Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Third Sunday after the Epiphany:
Amos 3:1-8   Psalm 139:1-11   1 Corinthians 1:10-17   Matthew 4:12-23

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: **The Third Sunday after the Epiphany**
    9:30am Solemn Mass (Church)
    11:00am Lunch (Parish Hall)
    11:30am Annual Meeting (Parish Hall)
    7:00pm   Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)
        —The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue—
    Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.
TUESDAY: Noon   Mass (St. Mary Chapel)

WEDNESDAY   Noon   Noon Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)
        6:30pm Contemplative Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)

THURSDAY   Noon   Noon Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)

FRIDAY   Noon   Noon Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)
      AA Meetings
        8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)
        8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

SUNDAY   **The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany — Candelmas**
        8:00am Low Mass (Church)
        10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)
          AA Meeting
        7:00p Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)