

## Scripture Reading

### **A Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew** (*Matthew 4:18-20*) *Jesus Calls His First Disciples*

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother, Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed Him. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

### Reflection ~ The Lord calls me by name

**Jesus calls His first disciples.** The Lord made His way down to the shore where He knew Simon Peter and his brother, Andrew were. Peter and Andrew were in the midst of their work when Jesus came upon them. They were probably too busy to be a part of the crowd that listened to Jesus' preaching. The selection of His apostles is a very important matter to Jesus. It was no chance encounter. It was to be as the Father willed. *I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me (John 6:38)*. Jesus did not send out a general invitation calling for disciples but instead went personally to meet and call His disciples. Peter and Andrew did not volunteer, they were called and chosen personally by the Lord. *You did not choose Me, but I chose you .. (John 15:16)*. In the same way, my being a disciple of Christ was no accident – I did not just happen to be a Christian – no, I was called personally by the Lord.

**But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession... (1 Peter 2:9).** When we are baptised in Christ, we share Christ's mission – as king, priest and prophet, and the responsibilities of mission and service that flows from it (CCC#783). We share the kingship of Christ in helping to establish His kingdom and to draw souls to Him. "... *Jesus said, I will make you fishers of men.*" (*Matthew 4:19*). We share in the prophethood of Christ in spreading the Good News of Jesus and speaking on behalf of God. We share in the priestly office of Christ when we offer sacrifices to God for others and intercede for them. Thus in Christ, we are priest, prophet and king.

**Called but not chosen.** God desires every one to be saved (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4) and He calls every one even Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Jesus. To every person, God gives His saving grace at every present moment to move forward to salvation through a movement of his/her own free will. Though God's saving grace is ever present, a soul finds it hard to avail of God's graces if the person's heart is closed to God. Whilst God goes way out to help a soul, He never imposes on the free will of His creature. Judas was given the opportunity to become one of the twelve apostles and every grace was given to him to respond to this high calling. But Judas was careless to allow his weaknesses to overcome him. Greed closed his heart and blinded him. Through his own free will and greed, Judas jeopardised his soul. God had fore-knowledge of this and used Judas to fulfil the role of the traitor in the plan of salvation. It was so that Jesus could experience the pain of betrayal by one so close to His heart – one of His twelve apostles! The calling of Judas was part of God's will (cf. Acts 1:20, Psalm 69:25, Psalm 109:8). Jesus is indeed the Suffering Servant of God as prophesied by Prophet Isaiah.

### Conversation with Jesus

Precious Saviour, thank You for calling me to be a disciple of Yours. I am sorry You had to endure the agony of being betrayed by one of Your dearest and closest friends. I know every time I sin I betray You but You call me again and again to rise up from my sin especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation where through the absolution words by the priest spoken on behalf of You, You purified my soul and filled it again with sanctifying grace. Yes, I know no less than a miracle happens in the Confessional! Help me O Lord not to be closed to Your grace through my spiritual laziness, my presumption that heaven can be won by minimal efforts on my part and by being complacent about my weaknesses and bad habits. Help me not to take my faith for granted but to use it to expand Your Kingdom. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, help me to be a true disciple of Christ and be one of His chosen ones. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.