

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

GOSPEL

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After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come,' he said, 'and the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the Good News.'

As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men.' And at once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on a little further, he saw James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.

(Mark 1:14–20)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- John the Baptist was arrested and ultimately killed by Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled over the region of Galilee. John had been highly critical of the behaviour of Antipas in marrying Herodias, who was his niece and the former wife of his brother.
- The Sea of Galilee is also known as Lake Tiberias and Lake of Gennesaret. It is the largest freshwater lake in Israel, and is approximately 53 km in circumference, 21 km long and 13 km wide.
- Each gospel account of the calling of the disciples is slightly different. Compare this gospel to last week's reading.
- Simon and Andrew, James and John lived in the town of Capernaum on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Look at a map of Palestine. Most Bibles include one.

EXPLORING THE WORD

This week we return to the Gospel of Mark, which will be the main source of readings through the weeks of Ordinary Time this year. Mark's Gospel was the first of the accounts of Jesus' ministry to be written down. It is widely accepted that it was written about AD 65–70 for a community in Rome where Christians were undergoing persecution because of their faith. Because of this setting, Mark often recalls stories that give great hope to people and encourage them to stay firm in their faith in the face of opposition. In this gospel, the disciples do not make excuses or delay. They simply leave everything to follow Jesus. They are immediately drawn to the words and person of Jesus; nothing else is as important as the Kingdom of God and the one who preaches it.

- What is so attractive about the person of Jesus? What drew you to follow Jesus?
- The disciples undergo conversion and take up a whole new way of life. What are the signs of conversion in yourself?
- What have you left behind to follow Christ?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- If you cast out your net, what might you catch?
- Let go of something that makes it difficult for you to follow Christ.
- Share together some experiences of leaving things behind and embarking on a new way of life: leaving home to study, travel or marry; changing jobs to something completely different; moving to a different country or city. How was the experience for you? What challenges were involved?
- This week's psalm offers a wonderful prayer for catechumens:

Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth and teach me, for you are God, my Saviour.

Teach me your ways, O Lord.

