

SUNDAY PLUS



Follow me

A Year of the Word

Disciples of Jesus



by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

As you may know, Twitter is a social network that allows users to post messages of up to 280 characters online. Success on the network is usually defined by the users attracting a following, who are commonly known as "Twitter followers". Pope Francis was one of the largest following of all world leaders, having over 40 million Twitter followers.

Jesus of Nazareth had a more humble following and in today's Gospel you see him calling the first four followers. He does not

offer them an interview or a job description; he does not discuss the hours it will involve or how much they might be paid: he simply says "Follow me." He first asks them to give their lives a new direction, which will mean leaving the Sea of Galilee behind them, leaving their boats and nets behind them and leaving their families to follow him. He calls them to deep personal attachment to him.

Secondly he offers them a new identity. They already have a working identity of belonging to a particular family and being fishermen, and Jesus promises that he will make them into something else, fishers of people.

Whereas before their work connected them to fish, their new identity will connect them with people. And Matthew simply reports, they "followed him."

Discipleship is first and foremost about living in a relationship with Jesus; it is very personal enterprise. In that relationship they will gradually grow into new people whose governing identity will be that they are followers of Jesus. How important to us is our identity as disciples of Jesus?

Fr Denis McBride's many CDs, DVDs and books are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

Lord, sometimes it is hard to follow you. You can be very demanding, especially when I would like to take the easy way out. Walk with me when the going is tough. When it feels like winter, let me see the hope of spring ☩ Amen.

What was it about Jesus?

by Kasia Greenwood

Imagine a day like any other. You're going about your usual business, at the photocopier, sending emails, dealing with a customer. Then a stranger approaches with the words, "Follow me". I highly doubt your first instinct would be to abandon your work, home, and life to follow. Yet, that is just what the disciples were asked to do.

What is striking about the account of Jesus calling his first disciples is that the Gospel records their response as

immediate. They were called to follow and straight away, without question, they do so. What was it about Jesus that made these men leave everything behind?

In Isaiah today we hear that "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light". The great light of Jesus, shining so brightly, beckoned others to follow.

Do we recognise the moments when we are called? Do we recognise the face of God?

Kasia Greenwood is mother to three children and works in education.

Leaving all

by Joe Middleton

When Julie went home on leave to visit her family, unknown to the people she served as a missionary and nurse in a remote area of Papua New Guinea, hers would be a "different" experience. The house in which she had grown up really was the medieval castle which her father had inherited from an uncounted number of ancestral generations.

For a few weeks every three years, Julie would once again occupy her

former bedroom in the castle. Then she would pack her suitcase and, several days later, arrive at the village where she continued caring for people who built their own "castle" from the leaves and branches of the jungle.

Did Julie miss her own home comforts? If she did, nobody ever knew. When she died, she had almost no possessions of her own – but she did have a happy, peace-filled heart.

Jesus' apostles left their fishing boats, perhaps as precious to them as a castle. They found Jesus – and he was their everything.

Joe Middleton is a father, grandfather and retired lawyer.

"What is Jesus' dream? Jesus' dream is what in the Gospels is called the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God means love with God and love among us, forming a great family of brothers and sisters with God as the Father, who loves all his children and is full of love when one who was lost returns to the fold. This is Jesus' dream. Are you willing to make it your own? Are you willing also to change to embrace this dream?"

Pope Francis

Today:
Isaiah 8:23 – 9:3
1 Corinthians 11:10-13, 17
Matthew 4:12-23

Monday:
2 Samuel 5:1-7, 10
Mark 3:22-30

Tuesday:
2 Samuel
6:12-15, 17-19
Mark 3:31-35

Wednesday:
2 Samuel 7:4-17
Mark 4:1-20

Thursday:
2 Samuel
7:18-19, 24-29
Mark 4:21-25

Friday:
2 Samuel 11:1-4, 5-10, 13-17
Mark 4:26-34

Saturday:
2 Samuel
12:1-7, 10-17
Mark 4:35-41

Next Sunday:
Malachi 3:1-4
Hebrews 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-40

