

Welcome to
St Andrew's Cathedral,
Our Lady of Good Counsel,
St Mary's, Forebank

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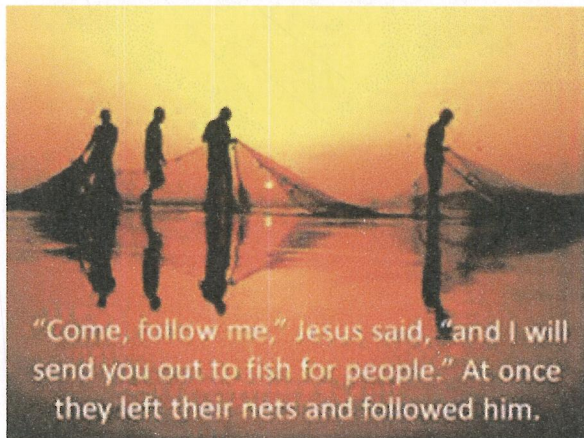
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3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

21 January 2024

Next Sunday: 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time -
Year of Mark (B)

Dear Friends and Parishioners,



This Sunday we are taken to the Sea of Galilee and we witness the call of the first disciples, given to us by Saint Mark.

Simon and Andrew are in the midst of their daily tasks – casting their nets into the water - and it is there that they are called. Similarly, James and John are in their boat mending their nets. In the midst of the everyday, they are called to great things. This is the first day of the rest of their lives. This is the beginning of their new futures.

God's Word often reminds us of our beginnings. Once upon a time we had very little, and no great future. But people always have a hope of better things and better times. As scripture says, *we put our hopes in Christ even before he came*, not knowing how, when or in what way God would save us. Paul assures us in the scripture today that

such hopes are not disappointed. But disappointment does follow when we move in the opposite direction, when our hopes turn from God to self, forgetting our origins in him, and in our ancestors who with Joshua at their head entered a land they had not tilled, having been saved at the Red Sea by the Lord's own *glorious triumph*.

Already the liturgical year is moving swiftly. Lent is not far away, and with it the glorious celebration of the Easter mystery. In these Sundays leading towards Lent we are invited to take as our model the figures of the gospel - Peter, Andrew, James and John - who like Jonah (whom we also encounter today in the scripture) - were invited to *leave their nets*, their self, behind and turn to faith in God. The result of their efforts was remarkably similar: the message was believed the world over. Paradoxically, in moving from self to God, in moving back to our **biblical roots** as the pilgrim people, called to be the liberating sign of God in the world, they were given everything: fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children, land...a hundredfold.

A late but no less heartfelt *thank you!*

...to everyone for our wonderful Christmas liturgical celebrations in our three parishes of the Cathedral, St Mary's, and Our Lady of Good Counsel: to the organists, musicians and choirs; the church cleaners, the MCs and altar servers; those who arranged the flowers, the sacristans, all who helped as stewards; our readers, cantors, Ministers of Holy Communion, those who built the cribs, those who always offer us and our visitors hospitality, and everyone involved in any way.

You have all put in an immense amount of work for the service of the Church and the community and Bishop Stephen, Father Michael and myself want to express our most sincere appreciation for all that is done by so many volunteers in the course of the year, and in a particular way at Christmas time. I hope that our celebrations are always a source of uplift, strength and comfort for you all.

Bishop Stephen Father Michael and myself also thank you for the many cards, gifts and prayers we received over the Christmas season. Your generosity is very kind, we appreciate it very much and it reminds us how blest we are to be sharing this journey of faith and celebration with you.

Kevin