

FEBRUARY 20, 2021
Saturday after Ash Wednesday
Luke 5: 27-32

“ONE WITH PEOPLE LOVED BY HIM.”

During this Lent, we are encouraged to follow our Lord in His suffering and sacrifices to be one with Him. When Jesus said to Levi or Matthew “Follow me”, Jesus is not only calling Him to use his feet to follow Him but all of himself. According to St. Bede the Venerable: "By 'follow' he meant not so much the movement of feet as of the heart, the carrying out of a way of life. For one who says that he lives in Christ ought himself to walk just as he walked, not to aim at earthly things, not to pursue perishable gains, but to flee base praise, to embrace willingly the contempt of all that is worldly for the sake of heavenly glory, to do good to all, to inflict injuries upon no one in bitterness, to suffer patiently those injuries that come to oneself, to ask God's forgiveness for those who oppress, never to seek one's own glory but always God's, and to uphold whatever helps one love heavenly things. This is what is meant by following Christ. In this way, disregarding earthly gains, Matthew attached himself to the band of followers of One who had no riches."¹ This Lent, we are asked to do sacrifices for the sake of Christ, serve the poor, and be kind to all in words and deeds. Are we willing to do that even if there are lot of hindrances and obstacles? This is first message of the gospel.

Second, most of the time, we go to a doctor to ask medical advice because that's the only reason why we visit them. We don't go to them just to chat, socialize, or even hang out with them, especially nowadays we are regulated. Physicians are the right persons for those who are sick and need medical attention and we go to them because of this. Jesus is the Divine Healer and Physician, that's why people go to Him to be restored and healed from their sickness. This was the reason of Jesus when Pharisees and scribes were complaining why He ate with tax collectors and sinners, sinners and not the

¹ www.dailyscripture.net

righteous. “The religious leaders were especially upset with Jesus' behavior towards public sinners like Levi. The Jewish people were roughly divided into two groups: the orthodox Jews who rigidly kept the law and all its petty regulations, and the rest who didn't keep all the minute regulations. The orthodox treated the latter like second class citizens. They scrupulously avoided their company, refused to do business with them, refused to give or receive anything from them, refused to intermarry, and avoided any form of friendship with them, including table fellowship. Jesus' association with the latter, especially with tax collectors and public sinners, shocked the sensibilities of these orthodox Jews.”²

My brothers and sisters, we likewise sought by Jesus because He seeks healing of our body, mind, and spirit. He cares for us as a Good Shepherd cares for His sheep, He wants to restore us to wholeness of life. This is not the way the Pharisees and scribes dealt with people, instead of caring and compassionate, they neglected them. They don't want to be identified with people not in line with themselves.

So, Jesus is telling us today: ‘follow Me’ which means be with Him with all our hearts, mind, and spirit. Do good, sacrifice for others, and live like Jesus. Also, be compassionate to those marginalized, be identified with those people labelled by the society as sick, lepers, and despised. May the Season of Lent lead us closer to Jesus by being one with those loved by Him.

² ibid