

JANUARY 15, 2022
Saturday of the 1st Week in OT
Mark 2: 13-17

“GOD CHOSE US.”

As I emphasized a couple of days ago, God has its own plan. Sometimes we do not expect it or plan for it, God has its own way to ‘deliver’ it to us. That’s why we must be ready for the unexpected as God do things not in our way but in His way. Expect the unexpected.

Our first reading centered on the call of Saul, the first king of Israel according to God’s plan. He met Samuel ‘accidentally’ and the rest was history. “The hand of God is now seen as events unfold. The donkeys of Saul’s father, Kish, had wandered off somewhere and Saul was sent by his father to bring them back. It is perhaps symbolic that Saul is presented as a handler of donkeys, which tended to stray far from home. He is, after all, going to be the king of a rebellious people. The apparently accidental encounter between Saul and Samuel is clearly presented (in the full text) as something clearly planned by God. When they first meet, Saul does not recognise the prophet. Samuel, for his part, has already been told by God that this Benjaminite has been specially chosen to lead God’s people and save them from the hands of the Philistines.”¹ Some people are destined to follow God’s way and a lot of people, in the eyes of others or the person itself, God chose them unexpectedly or surprisingly. He knows what is inside our hearts and the future of His call to us.

This is what described in our gospel, the call of Levi or Matthew. Why Jesus chose a tax collector, considered a public sinner, one of the much-despised group of people that time? He chose a ‘very strange person’ – a sinner and hated by all. “Yet, here is Jesus offering one such person an invitation, ‘Follow me.’ We need to know that Jesus never goes by stereotypes. Nor does He judge people by their past behaviour. He is only

¹ livingspace.sacredspace.ie

interested in what they can be now and in the future. There and then, Levi drops everything and goes after Jesus. That is what following Jesus means. It is what Peter and Andrew; James and John had also done.”² Even martyrs and saints, from sinners to saints, those people regarded by all as bad people can change and be a good person. Jesus will never give up because He sees in those people, change will happen and make them better persons.

My sisters and brothers, we too in our own lives, we can have the same experience or events leading us into certain or sometimes very unexpected situations. God has a message and communicating with every one of us in every experience we have and in every person we meet. So, let us remember and recall those events in the past and how we acted or did not respond to them. Let us reflect, recognize, and discern what God is telling us and where He wants us to go and what preferences, options, and choices He wants us to make happening out from our everyday experiences. We are called to be proactive and not merely a re-active response.

When Jesus dined with sinners and tax collectors Pharisees exclaimed: “If Jesus really was a Rabbi, He would have had nothing to do with such people. To sit down and eat with such ‘unclean’ people was to be contaminated oneself. Jesus replies: ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. I did not come to call the virtuous but sinners.’ As we have already seen, Jesus’ whole mission is one of salvation and redemption of restoring people to wholeness. And how is He to help sinners change unless He is in direct contact with them? By being with sinners, Jesus is not approving or condoning or turning a blind eye to their behaviour. He describes them as ‘sick’; they are in need of healing and rehabilitation. This can only be done by reaching out to them.”³ Let us do the same. Let us reach out to our brothers and sisters who need healing and remember them in our prayer always. We are chosen to bring love and healing to others.

² ibid

³ ibid