

Homily For the Feast of St. Andrew, Apostle - Year II

St Peter's 8:30am/7:00pm Masses - Tuesday, November 30, 2021

Romans 10:9-18 "How are they to hear without someone to proclaim him."

Psalms 19:1-4 "The heavens are telling the glory of God."

Matthew 4:18-22 "Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of people."

Don't Keep It To Yourself

Introduction

Recently, some people got to see the northern lights, even as far south as Calgary. They described how beautiful that phenomenon is to behold. The psalmist tells us that the heavens above us have a kind of speech. They are telling us something about the one who created them. Every day and every night there is a majesty which is revealed to us as a kind of communication from the God who created those heavens.

But nature which is closer to us than the cosmos can be as awesomely destructive as it is beautiful. Those who live in the lower mainland of British Columbia know this all too well. This power of nature speaks to us of death. Our awareness of death is a reminder that all is not beauty and perfection. And yet, our Good News, the Good News we are preparing for during Advent, is that Jesus was born right in the middle of the chaos, to redeem it, to call out to us even more surely than do the heavens.

I have a nature calendar with pictures for every day. Some of those photos of animals or mountains or seasons are so beautiful. It was given to me by a friend who died during Covid time. I failed at my attempt to get him the anointing of the sick which, had I been successful, would have been his last sacraments before his journey to meet Jesus. I have to admit that I am a little angry about that: At myself, because I should have been able to do something for him; At the pandemic and the lockdown measures which prevented so beautiful a sacrament from being administered.

But that is not the end of the story, because the Good News has come, and will continue to be proclaimed, which overcomes all loss and which dries all tears.

From this ambo and this sanctuary, and from all those holy places throughout the world, we hear the Sacred Scriptures proclaimed, which tell us of great and glorious things, but also the results of sin and death. I think a lot about how we proclaim our Sacred Scriptures. I think also about hearing the Word of God. At home in our prayer chair, we might read passages, but at mass, or in any public liturgy, we never just read the Scriptures. We proclaim them. These Scriptures have the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and we must proclaim them with faith that this is as true as the fact that Jesus Christ is God who became human and lived among us.

Matthew

The Apostle, St. Andrew, had a longing in his heart to hear something that would make a difference to his life. When he heard John the Baptist preach baptism for the repentance of sin, he heard words that had all the power of the natural world and the supernatural world joined together in one great proclamation of truth.

It was likely problematic in that family. Andrew was off listening to speeches while his brother, Peter, was keeping up the family business of fishing. But, what a result of that conflict. It was while he was listening to John that Andrew met Jesus, seeing him baptised by John and hearing him referred to as the Lamb of God. As a result of this proclamation and this hearing, Andrew also became the first disciple of Jesus.

Today's passage from Matthew doesn't tell us what John's Gospel does. It simply says that Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee and spoke to both Andrew and Peter, calling them to follow him. What a powerful voice to make them change their entire lives.

Jewish rabbis were normally chosen as mentors by interested students, not the other way around. As usual, Jesus does things differently. He is not out for a stroll. He is preparing to bring the kingdom to humankind. This kingdom will be

preached by those Jesus calls. It is so striking that they drop their nets and set out after the one who promises to make them fishers of men.

Romans

In today's passage from that most remarkable letter to the Romans, Paul emphasizes both internal conviction, but also public affirmation of what Christ has done for us. Salvation is offered only to those who call on the Lord. Paul knows of no other way of salvation, of participation in the covenant, for Jews or Gentiles. God's word proclaimed has power. Confess with your lips, St. Paul says. The key is both speaking and hearing. But hearing is not something passive, like listening to nice music. It is active and requires the heart's participation.

Call To Action

The psalmist prays: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Good News." A big problem for us is that the message from the world around us is that religion is a private matter. Do it if you want but keep it to yourself. You have no right to impose it on others, either in your own relationships or in public. But that's not what the message of the cosmos is. It proclaims the glory of God without ceasing. It's also not what Andrew did. He let the longing in his heart draw him to Jesus, then he told his brother about it. What a difference this makes to Peter and to the Church.

Every day now, as I turn my nature calendar from one day to the next, one beautiful nature image to the next, I pray that God will have called my friend David to himself, even without that sacrament of healing. I'm sure David will have answered the Lord, just as Andrew and Peter did, and it will make all the difference, just as it has for the whole Church.

Today, we thank St. Andrew that he listened to his heart, that he received what John the Baptist proclaimed, that he recognized the Messiah, and most of all that he did not keep this Good News to himself. Praise God, who is good, and who shares his blessed life with us today. Today, let us at least pray for someone to hear Good News, and maybe even be the footsteps coming to proclaim that Good News.

Key Scripture Passages Today

Entrance Antiphon: *The Lord saw two brothers, Peter and Andrew, and he said to them: Come after me and I will make you fishers of men.*

Collect: *We humbly implore you, O Lord that, just as the blessed Apostle Andrew was for your Church a preacher and pastor, so he may be for us a constant intercessor before you.*

Romans: *If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth."*

Psalm 19:1-4: *The heavens are telling the glory of God. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.*

Matthew: *As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him.*