

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – Sunday January 25, 2026

At the beginning of today's Gospel, we hear what might seem like a small detail: *John the Baptist has been arrested*. But this moment marks a profound turning point.

As long as John continued preaching and baptizing, Jesus remained somewhat in the background. He had already gathered disciples, already begun preaching, already performed his first miracle at Cana—but only quietly, almost part-time. John's voice was still the one sounding in the wilderness. When John is arrested, everything changes. The last prophet, as the crowds saw him to be – has now been silenced. And now the moment has come for Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, to step fully into his mission.

Matthew tells us that Jesus moves to Capernaum, a busy lakeside town—larger, more diverse, more connected than Nazareth. And then, at this decisive moment, Jesus calls others to join him. Jesus doesn't begin his mission alone. Peter, Andrew, James, and John already know Jesus. They met Him through John the Baptist. They had spent time with Him. They had seen signs of his power and begun to believe He was the Messiah. But belief alone isn't enough for Jesus. Now He calls them to follow Him—to work with Him—to help build the Kingdom of God. Jesus doesn't simply announce the Kingdom; he entrusts it to others – to them, but my friends – to us! I think it's important to note where this call takes place.

- The disciples aren't in the synagogue.
- They are not at prayer.
- They are not at a religious gathering.

They are at work—casting nets, mending gear, doing what they do every day. Jesus walks right into the middle of their ordinary lives.

- He doesn't wait until it's convenient.
- He doesn't ask them to come and find Him.
- He comes to them.

This tells us something essential about how God works.

Jesus doesn't want to be a small part of our lives, tucked away for Sundays or special occasions. He wants to be involved—in our work, in our families, in our routines, in our

struggles. He walks into our lives, calling us even when it interrupts us. And that call always involves trust.

Think about it – while we are nourished by the Sacraments and we find strength and hopefully consolation here. It is in the circumstances and events of our lives we feel closest to God. Jesus asks these fishermen to leave behind what is comfortable and familiar—their nets, their boats, their livelihood—and to follow him into something uncertain and they have no guarantees, no detailed plan, no promise of comfort. Yet they go. Why? Because they trust him.

Jesus doesn't work alone—and he still doesn't. The Church exists because Jesus chose to work through ordinary people. Fishermen then – parishioners now. Parents, grandparents, workers, volunteers—people like us. **Each of us is called to work with him.**

We respond to that call in very real, practical ways:

- By remaining faithful to prayer and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.
- By living our faith at home—through patience, forgiveness, and love in our families.
- By serving generously in the parish and the wider community.
- By speaking about our faith when it matters, and even more so, by living it consistently.

Often, as Christians we are invited with small, gentle nudges to step outside our comfort zone, to help someone in need, to reconcile with someone or seek forgiveness, to volunteer, to listen more carefully. These inspirations usually come with a price, as most good things do and they ask us to really trust God – and when we do our faith grows. It isn't easy. Life is already demanding, and when Jesus asks more of us, our first instinct is often to hesitate or resist. That's when we must remember *why* Jesus calls us. He calls us because He loves us, and wants us close to Him and because only He can give our lives the meaning and purpose we long for. Jesus doesn't call us for His own selfish reasons. He calls us for our sake—and when we respond, he never abandons us. In a few moments, He will remind us of this at the altar.

It is only because He has called us to be His followers that we are invited to receive Him in Holy Communion. As we do, may we thank Him for continuing to call us—and may we all

make the commitment this week, to listen a little more closely, to trust God a little more deeply, and follow Jesus a little more courageously.

Jesus doesn't work alone – He could, but He doesn't want to.

He is calling, and He IS STILL calling us to work with him.

Fr. Chris' Homilies