

Not long ago I was browsing through my social media feed and saw a post, it was an interaction between two people that went something like;

The first person says, “I need you to help me with something, I can't tell you where we are going, I can't tell you what we are going to do, I just need you to come with me”

The response is a simple “I'm in!”

I remember thinking at the time, hold on, I need some details. It is true I am not a spontaneous type of person, but who does this? Then, I read the Gospel selection today. Well, there are at least 4 men that did this 2000 years ago. Knowing what we know now it's probably a good thing Jesus did not elaborate on the journey.

During our lives we are exposed to people that seem to embody leadership. We see both good and bad, but there are a few that embody true leadership. As a young sailor I was exposed to several leaders, one stood out from the rest. J. Lane Willson took over as the captain of the destroyer I was stationed on. One of his first acts was to order that every brussel sprout be removed, and none were to be brought on the ship if he was there. I knew then I was going to like him. For the next two years he would display the characteristics of a good leader, he took the time to get to know the crew, he dealt with problems as they arose, and he was sympathetic to the struggles that we all faced. This made the training and preparation for our duties much more tolerable. We would follow that man anywhere, and we did.

The saying goes “God does not call the equipped, he equips the called”. These men going about their daily lives certainly were not prepared for the task that they volunteered for, they were fisherman, common folks. They saw something in Christ, they acted in trust, they acted in faith.

The word “call” is used many times to describe a desire to do something we may not be able to see ourselves achieving. Almost like a desire. I often describe being called to do something as not necessarily something you run towards, but something you do not run from.

When I started the process of inquiring about the diaconate, we had not had a deacon assigned at this parish. My interest had stemmed from being involved with religious education, I had questions, I read some and had more questions. I had seen a few deacons, I didn't know all that was needed, but I read a little more. Eventually I was introduced to the formation program, and I got to read a lot more. What has become clear is that the process of recognizing a calling and following it

is not usually an epiphany of some sort. It is the willingness to take the first step and act on faith that there is a purpose for the journey. And yes, I still have questions, but what I have found out is when you stop having questions is when you must stop and reevaluate. We are by nature inquisitive beings; the hard part is that some of the questions won't be answered in this life.

It would make no sense for God to call someone to a task but not equip them. I know from experience that God puts the calling for a task in our hearts but then doesn't leave us there. The next thing He does is to equip us for that task. I can't say exactly how that works. There is much that I don't know about it, but this I do know; God does the calling and God does the equipping. It's all about God and not about us.

After God has called you to a task and then equipped you to do a task, then He will enable you do to that task and this enabling comes from the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul wrote, *"I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ"* (Phil 1:6), so no matter what that work is in you that God placed upon your heart, He can enable you to do it, but it must be for His glory and His glory alone.

Many times, people place their own wisdom above God's wisdom. They do not see how the Spirit can help them find solutions to life's challenges. In Corinth, some Saints argued that their individual opinions were part of the gospel of Christ, and that caused divisions among the members. For instance, Peter advocated for adherence to the Jewish traditions as part of being a follower of Christ, Paul on the other hand left those ways to the Jewish people and did not include those ideas in his teaching. How does the Spirit supply solutions to this problem and how can it help you face similar difficulties?

In Jerusalem, that first Pentecost, there were people from all over the world. They had little or nothing in common. The barriers of national languages and interests and diverse cultural backgrounds stood between them. Yet when the wind of God's Spirit swept over them, this estrangement, this separation seemed suddenly to blow away. The diversity and differences were still present, the language and cultural variety amongst the people on that day didn't disappear. They just didn't matter anymore.

The Spirit had brought them together as one in the body of Christ. The unity that we experience as Christians is only possible through Jesus Christ.

- We all believe and trust that Jesus is our Saviour.
- He has died for us and given us forgiveness.
- He rose from the dead and assures us that we too will rise from the dead.

He has brought all of us together as members of God's family regardless of our backgrounds and all the things that divide us in this world.

This is highlighted for us at our baptism. In an amazingly simple way, through the water and the Word he has united us all together with him. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, and when I say "we", I mean people from every tribe, nation and tongue. There is no discrimination in God's family. Paul says it so well in Galatians, "For you are all children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3.26-28).

Jesus wants you to know that you were never meant to live for Him without Him. Without His full help and power from the Holy Spirit. Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit to enable us to live the life we are called to in Christ. One of the names of the Holy Spirit is the Helper because He came to help us live a Christ-filled, Christ-centered life.

To walk in the Spirit means you will bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is described as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Notice, these character qualities reflect the character of Christ and are called the fruit of the Spirit.

It is not the fruit of any person, but the divine fruit of God's Spirit. To walk in the Spirit means you are dependent upon Christ and the Spirit to change you and cultivate within you the fruit of godly character.

Do not be afraid to answer the call of the Lord, when we pray, we ask God to send his spirit to guide us. The apprehension to give a quick answer of "I'm in" should not be so much what may lie ahead, but from where the request is coming from. we should all be ready when God calls.