

FATHER MARK SCHULTE
HOMILY
THIRD SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME (A)
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“Brothers Apostolic”

My Brothers and Sisters, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, and then He spent forty days in the desert engaged in fasting and prayer, along with the temptations of the devil. Now He is ready to begin building His Church.

Perhaps most people who are planning to establish an organization would choose those whom they consider to be very intelligent, perhaps those who are influential in the community, community leaders, politicians, and other professional types. As we can see, Jesus did not use this method of selecting associates. He began by choosing brothers, family members, common laborers, fishermen (Mt 4:12-23).

First He selected Peter and his brother Andrew. Then He chose the (brothers J) James and John. It tells us He was watching them as He walked along the lake shore. As He watched them what was He looking for? The mission that Jesus will have for His apostles, the first members of His Church, will require certain qualities, characteristics. These first four men were brothers, family members, working together, in business together. This indicates that they had a certain sense of reliability, love, and respect for each other. The Apostle Paul in the second reading said that believers should be united in the same mind and purpose (1 Cor 1:10-13, 17). It would appear that this is the case with the brothers. They are able to work together respectfully.

The fact that they were family members had to be in the mind of Jesus. Building a church through faith and family go hand in hand. Family members were much less likely to compete with each other. The Apostle Paul said to the Romans; “Put away ambitious thoughts and associate with people who are lowly” (Rm 12:16). Jesus has chosen the lowly of the community to start His Church. These brothers were hard workers, fishermen.

Jesus was building His Church on the foundation of ordinary people, not upon powerful men and elitists. This is a message to all people that the Catholic Church is for them too, it is not an exclusive club. The fact that the brothers were gainfully employed and busy at work indicated to Jesus that these men could carry on the Church when He was no longer with them. They weren’t professionals *per se*, but they were capable.

Jesus called the brothers, these family members out of their busy lives to be His Apostles and they readily responded to His call. They didn’t present all kinds of excuses as to why they couldn’t follow Him; too busy, had other responsibilities, etc. They simply dropped what they were doing and followed Him.

You and I should be able to see ourselves in these simple men. We should say to ourselves, “If He chose them, He can choose me.” Look around your own family members. Are we working together as disciples for Jesus Christ. Are we doing all that we can to lead each of our family members to Jesus? If we are Moms and Dads, are we willing to encourage our children to follow Jesus closely, perhaps even as a priest or religious?

Jesus said that God’s power shines more fully through those who are weak (2 Cor 12:9) (CCC 273, 1508). These first Apostle brothers were not weak, but they weren’t political and social powerhouses either. By choosing them the rest of the world could see that the Church is the work of God not simply the work of men. The Church relies on the Power of God to keep going. These simple men show that God has a place for everyone in His Kingdom. After all Jesus Himself was referred to by the elitist as only a carpenter’s son (Mk 6:2). By choosing these brothers He was choosing people like Himself.

Jesus observed Peter, James, John, and Andrew closely – to see if they had the right stuff for what He had planned for them. Jesus is watching you too. What does He see? Does He see a person who is ready to follow Him when He calls?

NOTE: CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church