

SERMON 3A 2026.

In this still new year, we continue to hear in our Sunday Gospel readings of the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, only 2 weeks ago we remembered the baptism of Jesus, and last week John the Baptist giving witness to Jesus, that he was the Lamb of God, whose mission was to take away the sin of the world. Today we hear how John the Baptist is arrested and Jesus takes the centre stage, moving back to Galilee, making his base in the town of Capernaum, thus according to Matthew fulfilling one of the Old Testament prophecies. In the passage we have just heard there seems to be a great sense of urgency, straight away Jesus begins preaching, preaching that the Kingdom of God is near at hand, and that his listeners should repent; there is no time to lose. He begins to choose his first disciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John, and upon being called to follow him, they immediately leave their work behind and follow him. Jesus then begins there formation, begins to teach them and instruct them, for their role as fishers of men.

In listening to this Gospel reading today we should remember how we also are called to be fishers of men, that Jesus asks us to follow him, that we are called on to repent and turn back to God, to turn aside from all those distractions and false Gods in our world and to be our Lords true disciples. That word repent is important, for it isn't just about saying sorry, about repentance, it is also about having new priorities, a change of perspective, a change in lifestyle even, to follow that light of Christ which Isaiah prophesied of in the first reading today. Today, we could look at the call to repent and follow Jesus, in the light of Christian unity, since we are now in the final day of the annual week of prayer for Christian unity, and the duty we have to build up the unity of the Church. This annual week of prayer began last Sunday, with noon services each day, normally today the last day of this week of prayer would be celebrated as the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, but being a Sunday, the 3rd ordinary Sunday takes precedence. To help us with these thoughts of unity, we had that beautiful reading from Paul's letter to the Corinthians, with Paul pleading with the members of that community to be united – "to be united again in your belief and practice." If we all have the duty, like those first disciples to build up the Kingdom of God upon earth, meaning to build up the Church then we have to work at Christian unity, since Christian disunity and division does so much damage, and causes so much scandal. This is one of those urgent works at which we must be busy, in prayer and action, to remember the duty we all have to grow in the knowledge of our faith, a knowledge which will help us to share it with others and help us to understand the views and teaching of other Christian denominations.

All these themes of discipleship, of Christian unity, of being called to be fishers of men, makes me think of one word, and that word is Vocation, a word which tells us that God has a plan for us, for each one of us, each one of us has a role in building up his kingdom, in building up his Church, each one of us is a disciple. Every one of us is called to holiness, we are not just called to be physically present in Church on a Sunday, but are called to be holy and spotless, are called to a path of growing in the knowledge and the love of God. This Christian vocation which we all have may not be dramatic, it may be a vocation to live as a Christian parent, spouse, brother or sister or in whatever job we have, but we are all called to be holy and this is seen at least in part in being desperate to do Gods will, just as desperate as Jesus was, just as desperate as those disciples were, who immediately followed him when he called them. Lets us give this some thought

and prayer today and over these days, lets think how is God calling me, what am I being called to do, how I am being called to build up unity, to build peace, to proclaim the Kingdom, what can I do, how can I be holy in my family and in my work, in my friendships and in my parish.