



Season of Lay Ministries

Second Sunday of Epiphany

15 January

A call to discipleship

Readings

Isaiah 49:1-7;
Psalm 40:1-12;
1 Corinthians 1:1-9;
John 1: 29-42

Introduction:

Overview of the themes of the readings

What: Have you noticed anything about all the readings today, and in particular the gospel reading?

They are about calling and following and not proclamation.

Most often, the sermon slot is the time when the minister breaks apart the word for the day, explains some contextual theology and then asks members of the congregation what they are doing to proclaim the Good News.

Perhaps the focus needs to be more on how we answer when God calls?

Do we, like Isaiah, feel that we are unworthy to be called? Is our faith strong enough?
Can we answer like the Psalmist in verse 7, "Here I am!! I delight to do your will...."
Or do we do like Andrew, hear, see, believe, and follow!

Introduce Andrew: A Lay leader

Who is Andrew? What is he best known for in the New Testament?

We do not know much of Andrew, apart from the fact that he was Peter's brother, and lived very much in his brother's shadow. The one thing we do know is that he was a faithful follower of Jesus, from his first calling, to his death on the Saltire cross, he unswervingly kept faith in the God who had called him to follow.

What is discipleship: A Follower culture:

The world

As you will all know we live very much in a "follow me" culture. Whether it's on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat or YouTube, those who have such accounts often see their impact on the world by the number of followers they have or likes they get. Many look to social media of any and every type to see what is happening to the happening people, the influencers, be they a Kardashian, a Princess, a musician, or a footballer. Sometimes we find ourselves following people simply because others follow them. Jesus warns us about doing that.

The Way of Jesus

And yet today, in our gospel scripture we are led alongside a lakeshore near Galilee, following an unknown rabbi, walking, and calling some unknown people to follow him, to journey with him. As he chose his small band of disciples by pathways and lakeside, Jesus did not seek the most holy, or the most powerful. And without checking his Wikipedia or Linked In page or googling his social media, these two disciples of John acknowledged his presence, heard his call, left their jobs, and followed, turning from a known past, toward an unknown future. Little did they dream of how thoroughly he would overturn the world of their understanding and inaugurate a future so different to the one that they might have envisioned. The disciples had no clue of the journey's route or destination. Whatever these simple fisherfolk saw - it was enough for them to leave all their worldly possessions, and their families to follow him.

So What? Turn and turn again

They had no real idea of who this Christ was that they were following. "Then Jesus turned..."

Jesus does not turn to them because they have the right words or rituals. Jesus turns to them, because they turn to him, and calls them into relationship. Come and See. With that he invites them to join a movement not an organisation. He invites them into

a friendship. He invites them to listen actively to his words and to his way. He invites them to see before they say, and then to follow and serve, to proclaim the good news. And so, Andrew returned and went to find his brother.

Andrew knew that if he brought his brother into the presence of Jesus, that his brother could be transformed in just the way that he, Andrew, had been transformed by Christ. Jesus came to manifest his ministry of loving service and to invite all humanity to follow that way that leads to justice and peace for world. Andrew heard the call.

What Now:

So, what do we know of Andrew. Perhaps still not very much. But I can tell you that for every leader like Peter, James, and John, in the history and life of the church, there are thousands and thousands of Andrews, who see, who follow and then who go and tell. We call them the laity, Laos, the people. These are the people who are essential in making our church work, and in this Season of Lay Ministries, we celebrate them.

All of us, old and young, male, and female, black and white, of every class and caste, of every nation, are also called to follow him. Like Andrew, we are invited to follow that light and then to be that light ourselves, in a world that so desperately needs it. Come Lord Jesus, shine through the darkness. Shine in your church gathered today. Amen

*The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett
Bishop of Croydon*

Prayer

Loving God,
whose son called Andrew
to be a witness and an apostle;
give us the confidence
to bring others to see Jesus,
to follow him
and then go and tell others,
that the light of Christ
may shine in our lives.
Amen

Suggested hymns

All are Welcome
Take my life
All that I am
Here I am
Songs of thankfulness and praise
We have a gospel to proclaim
I will offer up my life: Matt Redman