



Sunday 25th January 2026
The Third Sunday of Epiphany

Gospel Reading

Matthew 4:12-23

Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

‘Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned.’

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus Ministers to Crowds of People

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Other Readings: Isaiah 9:1-4 Psalm 27:1,4-12 1 Corinthians 1.10-18

Homily

Have you ever wondered what it would feel like, being in the spotlight? Perhaps some of you have already been there, in your school plays or concerts, in your local amateur dramatic group, or even, in the West End! The sudden unveiling of yourself to the audience, from the darkness into the light.

The season of Epiphany shines the spotlight on our Lord Jesus, first of all, as the baby Jesus being visited by the Magi, then as an adult being baptised by John and

acknowledged by God, his Father. Jesus, being revealed to the world, being in the spotlight even, shining in the darkness of the world. Jesus, fulfilling the prophecies, bringing light into the darkness of an occupied Palestine.

Jesus is now starting on his public ministry. He hears of John the Baptist's arrest by Herod and begins where John has left off, repeating the words of John the Baptist, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". As well as being in the spotlight, he shines the spotlight into people's hearts, their motivations, revealing the darkness, illuminating it, and transforming it, through their repentance. Changing their direction, changing their perception of God as Jesus reveals God's love into their world, through his preaching, through his teaching and through his healing.

He moves to Capernaum on the edge of the Sea of Galilee and starts to gather his disciples, his followers who will, in time, help him spread the good news, that the kingdom of heaven, the Kingdom of God, is here.

Perhaps Simon and Andrew had known Jesus before. Perhaps the story in Luke of Jesus preaching to the crowds and Simon's admission of his own sinfulness after the unexpected haul of fish, had occurred before this meeting. In any event, the call came from Jesus, follow me and become fishers of men and they followed him, without hesitation.

They trusted in Jesus, they trusted that He would guide them and teach them and in so doing, they would become fishers of men and women, bringing others into the net of the good news of God's love. Showing through their lives, their actions and their words that the Kingdom of Heaven is indeed at hand, wherever, God's love is shared.

So, what does this mean for us as individuals and as church communities?

Well, do we as individuals, trust Jesus completely, trust him to direct our lives in his ways and give Him the opportunity to teach us, in prayer and through others? Will we let Jesus shine a spotlight into our lives or do we still need to have some control, to do it our way and to hide from the light?

And during these days of conflict and disasters, can we hold onto and believe in the light of Jesus Christ which never goes out, even when the world at this moment seems a very dark place?

And for us as church, as communities of faith, Jesus calls us to follow Him. To trust in Him as we move forward into new ways of being together, depending on Him to guide us, and leaning on Him, in prayer to help us discern our paths. Will we follow his light? Let us remember that every kind or patient word, every caring action, every service in the name of Jesus, brings his Kingdom, the Kingdom of heaven into the here and now.

And as Jesus reveals himself to the world, we are called to strive for the Kingdom of Heaven to be present in our world. As disciples of our Lord, that is our calling, to be the agents of change, to move against the tide of nationalism, of exclusion, of building barriers, of greed and lust for power. Instead, we are to spotlight our Lord

Jesus, to spread his good news that God loves every single person and creature on his planet and be that good news to everyone, whatever the cost. We are called to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Conversation Questions

1. How can we spotlight Jesus in our lives?
2. How can we discern where Jesus is leading us?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you?
What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*Almighty God,
whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your mighty power;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

(or)

*God of all mercy,
your Son proclaimed good news to the poor,
release to the captives,
and freedom to the oppressed:
anoint us with your Holy Spirit
and set all your people free
to praise you in Christ our Lord.*

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