

Tuesday Reflection 4th January 2022

In today's Gospel we read John's account of the calling of the first of Jesus's disciples (John 1:35-42). There were two of them, Andrew and one other, who might have been John himself. They were disciples of John the Baptist, who was fulfilling his mission to pave the way for the Lord. When the Baptist pointed Jesus out to them 'they followed Him', and when Jesus asked them "What do you want?" they responded with the curious question "Rabbi, where do you live?", to which Jesus replied with an invitation "Come and see", "so they went and saw ... and stayed with Him for the rest of that day".

This account of the calling of the first disciples is more detailed than that given by Mark and Luke, where Simon Peter and James and John and Levi simply obeyed the command 'Follow me', and perhaps contains all the elements of the beginning of a faith journey. First of all there is the preparation (in this case the preaching of John the Baptist), then there is the actual encounter with Jesus, the arousing of curiosity, and the response to an invitation. This is followed by a period of getting to know the Lord and joining in His journey, before receiving the commission to go out and preach the Gospel to all peoples.

This process is, I think, one in which we can all see elements of our own faith journey, a journey which can often be long and arduous, with many twists and turns and its fair share of setbacks. I was very moved by Stephen Fleming's testimony last Sunday, when he recounted the many setbacks he had experienced on his journey and the persistence and perseverance with which he overcame them.

When I look back on my own faith journey, I see a period of preparation, fuelled probably by intellectual curiosity as much as anything else, until I encountered an experience of faith in action in the life of my late wife Rosemary, who had definitely followed the words of the dismissal to give witness to the Gospel in the way she lived, and I was received into the Catholic Church. This was soon followed by a long dark and tortuous road, until I reached the staging post at which I now find myself. On this road I have been supported and encouraged by many people, without whom I would not have been where I am now.

We all have a story of our own faith journey to recount, and part of the synodal journey on which the Church is now engaged is to encourage us to share our stories and to explore ways in which we can journey together in the service of the Lord.

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