

"To Be a Fisherman"

Isaiah 9:1-4, Matthew 4:12-23

Third Sunday after Epiphany

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Some of you know that I was born in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Yes! It is close to the sea, the Pacific Ocean. Since I was a child, I have a very clear idea of what it means to be a fisherman. I remember going to the beach and being fascinated to see fishermen on the dock, and then every evening fishermen would arrive to begin their journey, hoping to have a good day fishing.

I sat facing the ocean pretending to play in the sand, but actually I was watching the fishermen, analyzing their facial expressions, and how they would very patiently wait for the right moment to catch a fish, and to be honest I always would wait for the best moment!!! The big moment! When they put a big smile on their face and announce that they had finally achieved their goal.

As a Christian, I also grew up listening that Jesus was our fisher of men. Maybe that's why I wondered if the fishermen had something magical, mystical.

I'm not kidding but sometimes I wondered if Jesus could come out of the water and take first the fishermen, then he will train them to come back to take children and elderly women, too. I mean literally fish us! DO NOT JUDGE ME! I was only 6-7 years old.

In Vallarta I was lucky that my neighbor liked to fish, in fact even now he continues to do. His name is Don Hilario. Don Hilario always returned to his house after work and no later than 6 pm he would go fishing. I never understood if he did as a hobby or as a way to bring some more food to his home, but I loved watching Don Hilario coming with a big metal bucket full of fish! He liked to share his catch with the neighbor. Unfortunately there were times that he came back with an empty bucket.

There were also other type of fishermen I saw back home. They were selling fish in the neighborhood and I still remember the sound they made to announce that they had fish for sale. They carried the fish on their shoulder just like this buckets, they also carried machete, with the machete to hit the metal bucket and sounded like a machete fight! Yelling FISH! FISH!

No scales were used to weigh the fish. Instead, they had stones that they knew how much they weighed, that would balance with the fish and according to that they will charge you.

When I came to Minnesota one of the first things I thought was How homesick I would be not living by the ocean and seeing fisherman.

Although I knew people can fish in the lakes but it still didn't seem the same to me. And they when the lakes froze over, I couldn't imagine someone fishing on a frozen lake Helloooooo CRAZY!

My arrival in Minnesota was in October and the beauty of its orange, brown, and yellow colors distracted me a little bite from homesick, winter came and there I saw it, a fisherman fishing on a frozen lake!

Yes, we all have resistance to change. And I could not let go the image of my fishermen by the Ocean. My mystical memories were frozen during that first winter.

Not so quick my first summer in Minnesota came and also met those fishing in the lake, including both those who actually go out looking for fish, and those who only posed to have an epic picture for the summer.

When Pastor Peter showed me the gospel for the sermon, I thought this is very easy I can do this! I can talk for years about fishermen, then he said Ana in English....
OH NO.

In this Gospel today, Jesus chooses Simon who called Peter, Andrew James and John. Jesus realized that his cousin John the Baptist was imprisoned and he knew it was the signal for the prophecy.: calling his disciples. The fact that the first four Jesus chose were fishermen has nothing extraordinary, really at that time there were NOT many professions.

Jesus calls ordinary people; Jesus calls us to be his disciples. Back then he call them to be witnesses of his ministry, death, and resurrection. He taught them.

In this passage, I see a BOSSY JESUS. He didn't ask or suggest. He said, "Follow me. I will make you fishers of men." Sisters, brothers, Jesus did not use a phone to call or send us an email, or send them a text much less give us a Twitter or any other way than we are used to today communicate.

But Jesus calls us to be his disciples to respond to the needs of others, praying, turning the excluded into the included, to share what we have, to listen and give encouragement to who need it. Jesus wants us to use our gifts not for our own benefit but for the benefit of whole community.

Today, I hope that you know that no matter if you have had fish in the frozen lake, in the ocean or be fisherman fan like me or even if you do not like to fish, Christ is not interested knowing how much experience you have fishing he knows us and knows you and you and you are here to belong to the light to answer to be his disciple.

Amen.