

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA WEYMOUTH
HOMILY FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (B)
15th JANUARY 2012

Our readings for this Sunday and next show how God calls us into a personal relationship with himself. Our Old Testament reading makes it very clear that God calls those whom he chooses. It was not Eli who called the young Samuel. It was God.

Next Sunday we will hear how Jesus called his first disciples.

St. Mark gives the impression that it was an immediate event – Jesus called and the disciples followed at once – love at first sight.

In today's Gospel St. John takes us behind the scenes and shows us that the relationship between Jesus and his disciples developed gradually.

Since Jesus called his disciples his friends this is about making friends.

Since Jesus invites us to be his friends too, this is also about prayer.

It starts with the John the Baptist pointing Jesus out to Andrew and an unnamed disciple who was probably John, the author of the Gospel.

They watch him.

This is the first stage of friendship – admiring someone at a distance.

It is also the first stage of prayer, being attracted to Jesus but not knowing what to do next

The second stage is to start a conversation. Without conversation there can be no relationship, no friendship.

Andrew and John decide to follow Jesus, but they do not have the courage to start a conversation.

Fortunately for them Jesus takes the initiative – he asks them what they want.

This a crucially important question to ask at the start of any friendship. True friends want what is good for each other; false friends want to use us for their own advantage.

Jesus knows what Andrew and John want but he is challenging them to examine their own motives. Do they want to use Jesus for our own advantage or to develop a mutually beneficial relationship?

It's the same with prayer.

The disciples answer Jesus with another question, "where do you live?"

This seems rather abrupt as if Jesus has caught them by surprise, but in fact it is an essential question. It's the equivalent of asking someone for their mobile number – it ensures that the two potential friends can stay in touch.

In prayer we have to know where to find Jesus – in the Scriptures, the liturgy of the Church and in acts of love.

So far Jesus has not given them a clear answer. This is a moment of tension. Will Jesus accept them or reject them?

There is a similar tension when we start to pray. Will our prayer be answered?

Jesus gives the most encouraging reply to Andrew and John. He could have said "Go and look," but instead he said, "Come and see." This means that he wants to be with them. Moreover he wants to take them home to his personal place. They *are* friends.

We know that we are accepted when we feel at home with him in prayer.

Today the Church asks us to pray and work for peace.

To make friends is to make peace.

Let's ask our Lord, Jesus, to help us make peace by making friends.

Rev Geoff Carey