

Fr. Romeo Evangelista's Homily
January 26, 2020
Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

A businessman ordered flowers to be sent to the opening of his new branch office. When the businessman got there, he was shocked to see the flowers with the inscription, "Rest in Peace". He was so outraged that he stopped at the florist to complain.

"It could be worse", the florist said, "Just think: Today someone was buried beneath a floral arrangement with the inscription, "Congratulations on your new location!"

We need to make sure to always send the right message. Our Lord never makes mistakes in sending His message to us and especially in calling us to follow Him.

As we knew like John the Baptist, Jesus used repentance in his initial utterances. There was thus a continuity in their ministries. But while John asked the people to repent to prepare for the coming of the Promised One, Jesus told the people to repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand, that is, the Bearer of the Kingdom was already in their midst.

While the evangelists Luke and John allowed time for the disciples to find out more about Jesus before they were called, Matthew did no such thing. He immediately showed Jesus calling two sets of fishermen brothers – Simon (later renamed Peter) and Andrew, and John and James. And except for telling them, come after me, and I will make you fishers of men, He gave no indication about what following him entailed – where they were going and what they would do. Matthew was not concerned with those details. His concern was that Jesus was about to begin his public ministry and he needed help so that he could make himself, the "great light", shine on people.

How did the first four disciples respond to Jesus' call? In Matthew's words, at once they left their nets and followed him.

By our baptism, we have received the light of Jesus and have thus been called to discipleship. In this regard, we have to begin with ourselves in the task of making the light of Jesus shine. We can do so by first uncovering the many dark areas within us – our selfishness, weaknesses, hurts, and inclinations to greed, power and fame – a life-long process. But as we

continue to do so, we are also to bring that light to others. And just as Jesus' ministry blossomed in an unlikely place called Capernaum, we are not to look for an ideal place before we begin this task. We are to bear witness to our faith whenever we are in our home, school, place of work, anywhere.

One spiritual writer's reflection on the details of making the sign of the cross on our forehead, on our lips and our breast may help us prepare for and exercise our discipleship.

Making the sign of the cross on our forehead shows the readiness of our minds to listen and understand the Word of God. And then prayerfully reflect on them and relate our faith with what is happening to and around us.

Making the sign of the cross on our lips signifies that we do not receive the Word of God only for our personal salvation. Rather, we are to share it with others by word and deed.

Making the sign of the cross on our breast tells us that our proclamation will not be effective unless there is a loving heart behind it. People are to believe in us not because we can memorize bible texts or win in religious debates, but because we care for them. In short, we have to show that Christianity is above all a religion of love and concern for others. This is our mission today to let the world know that we are a people of love. Some people leave or don't go to the church because they only see the bad things in the church. So we need to show the good side of our faith. In that sense we become the light of Jesus that shines in people.

If Jesus came to us as the "great light", we are to be "small lights" to others for the same task – to disperse the darkness that continues to envelope the world. Always remember even the smallest light shines in the darkness.