

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Ordinary Time, a period of 34 weeks in the Church's calendar marked by the extraordinary events, powerful words and great deeds of Jesus. The Gospel featured this year during Ordinary Time is the Gospel of Mark, the shortest of all four Gospels. Interestingly, though, the Gospel for today is not from Mark. We hear instead from John who introduces us to some of the first disciples.

What is fascinating about this Gospel is that unlike those of Matthew, Mark and Luke, in John it is the disciples who find Jesus. Finding Jesus is an important example of what it takes to be a Christian according to John.

In today's account John writes about three disciples: Andrew, an unnamed disciple and Peter, the brother of Andrew. Having heard John the Baptist point to Jesus as "the Lamb of God," Andrew and the other disciple seek Jesus out. They ask where he is staying, and are invited to "come and see." The next day, after spending time with Jesus, Andrew goes in search of his brother, Simon, tells him about Jesus and then brings him to the Lord.

These first disciples set an example for us. To be a Christian means to have a relationship with Jesus. This relationship calls for courage to step out of our comfortable setting and to step into the way of Christ. Often his way is opposed to the world, and so that relationship with Jesus is not easy. No one really likes to be on the outside. Yet those first disciples show us that on finding Jesus we are to stay with him and then draw others to him by the witness of our lives. They show us that we bring each other to God, to Jesus Christ, by being attentive to how God is at work among us.

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*, Pope Francis writes: "*I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think this invitation is not meant for him or her.*"

As we begin these first weeks of Ordinary Time before Lent, I encourage all of us to accept Pope Francis' invitation. If "*This Is Home,*" we can only be truly *at home* if we are encountering Jesus in all the many facets through which he reveals himself even when, at first, it is not comfortable.

Peace and blessings,
Fr. John