

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND ST SIMON STOCK
CARMELITE CHURCH 41 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET LONDON W8 4BB**

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Priests in the Parish: Fr Thaddeus Ekuma ocd, Fr Matt Blake ocd,
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3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – 24th January 2021

The call today from Jesus as we read in the Gospel is *follow me!* Two words that are loaded with implications. Let us consider three of the implications: first, the invitation depicts an image of a journey – a journey with Jesus; second, it presupposes leaving the place that we are presently; and third, it presupposes a mission – our co-operation with the mission of Jesus.

A journey with Jesus. In Mark's Gospel to follow Jesus is to undertake a voyage. Such a journey obviously requires a person to make the decision to take off. It does not demand an instant transformation of the whole person but a gradual one. It is a journey. Hence Jesus's call to Simon and his brother to follow Him is an invitation to a journey with Jesus. Peter in particular would learn a lot (by falling and rising) along the way. What discipleship requires from us is not perfection from the onset but a decision (in obedience to Jesus) to follow. The rest will come as a discovery, and Jesus promises to give what it takes to follow Him. "Follow me", he says, "and I will make you into fishers of men." He does not say "follow me because you're a good person" or follow me so that you will never know failure and everything will work out fine for you" but so that He will make you what He wants you to be. But the first prerequisite step is to follow, that is to embark on the journey with Jesus.

What about the things I will leave behind? The idea of a journey naturally presupposes that we leave the place we are towards the appointed destination. So it is important, as Jesus invites you to follow Him, to ask yourself 'where am I?' 'What do I need to leave behind in order to embark on this journey?' When God called Abraham in Gen. 12, Abraham had to leave his land behind. The land was his most treasured possession. For the disciples, Simon, Andrew, James and John, it was their fishing equipment as well as their father and fishing companions they had to leave behind. Fishing was their means of livelihood. Sometimes the journey with Jesus may demand that we part with our most treasured possessions, often these are not simply materials things but strongly-held beliefs or old ways as well. The territory through which Jesus takes us is always new and requires openness and traveling light, that is with no baggage.

Follow me for a mission. Jesus clearly states the purpose for which he called the first disciples. Previously fishermen Jesus was to make them become fishers of men. In other words, they were to move from catching fish to catching people. The emphasis is on *people* rather than *things*. They were to catch people by proclaiming the Good News whose content is that "The time has come and the Kingdom of God is close at hand." The Kingdom of God (the reign of God) as launched by Jesus and was manifested by His ministry of preaching and compassion. The disciples were to become an embodiment of that kingdom by their following of Jesus. As we already said, a necessary aspect of following Jesus is leaving behind our previous baggage, that is one way of describing repentance – a change of heart. Our mission as disciples of Jesus (that is, if we have already set out on that journey) is to proclaim the presence of God's kingdom in

our midst in order to bring people to repentance. In practice it is by our compassion that we are to bring people to the knowledge of God.

In this time of great anxiety, may our compassion permeate the world in great need of care. Let us reach out to others who are in need and thus make present to them God's kingdom which is among us. Amen.

NOTICES

Church Opening

Our church remains open for prayer and common worship at the usual times. We continue to do everything possible to make this church safe for everyone who comes here in order to provide spiritual support to everyone who needs it at these critical times.

Greater Precaution because of COVID-19 New Variants

We urge everyone who comes to our church to exercise greater precaution and observe our safety protocols in the church especially at this time. **Wear a facemask before entering the church, sanitize your hands by the entrance, and sit only on the marked spaces. Maintain at least 2m distance at all times while in the church.** Be assured the church is carefully sanitized and disinfected after every use.

Talks on Mark's Gospel by Fr Matt Blake

The series of talks by Fr Matt on Mark's Gospel started last Wednesday. These talks will help us understand the Gospel readings during this year of Mark's Gospel. There are three more Wednesdays left: January 27th, February 3rd and 10th. Each talk is livestream at 10.00am and repeated at 8.00pm on our website www.carmelitechurch.org and YouTube 'Kensington Carmelite Church.' You are invited to visit these pages and join in the talk.

Invitation from CAFOD

Join CAFOD online this coming Saturday 30th January from 1030am to 1230 and listen to CAFOD's representative live from Ethiopia talking about how your support is enabling communities gain access to clean water. Contact westminster@cafod.org.uk for registration link and further information.

Courses delivered by our Carmelite Spirituality Centre Oxford

The Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality (CACS) is happy to announce a new spirituality series — LIGHT for THE WORLD — featuring six exceptional Carmelites - Francisco Palau, Hermann Cohen, Père Jacques de Jésus, Titus Brandsma, Marie-Eugène and Raphael Kalinowski - who lived at a time of much political and social strife yet witnessed to the spirit of true Carmelite humanism. This series will explore their courage and Gospel fidelity. To register visit www.oxcacs.org or call 07849596572.

<u>Collections Last Sunday</u>	Offering	£937
	Gift Aid	£98

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus, OCD