

3B 2018 SML  
MK 1:14-20

I come from a family of fishermen. My father loved to fish. My uncles loved to fish. My brothers Rob and Tim love to fish. Me? I can take it or leave it. (Creamed corn story).

While I was priest at St. Rose in Freehold, a parishioner asked me if I wanted to go fishing on his boat. When I told him I wasn't much of a fisherman, but my Dad and brothers loved to fish, he said to invite them. When we got to the slip where the boat was docked in his backyard, behind his mansion, the parishioner's boat was more like a yacht. It was gorgeous. The parishioner hired a full time captain and a mate to man their yacht. Downstairs, there was a living room, full kitchen with refrigerator stocked with all kinds of sandwiches, salads, beer, soda, you name it - a bedroom and bathroom. It was gorgeous. The captain and the mate baited our lines and took the fish off the hooks when we caught one. While the mate was baiting my brother's line, Tim leaned over to me and said, "Dan, this is how the Kennedy's fish." That was the only time I went fishing when my hands smelled like Dove when I was done fishing.

The same parishioner asked my Dad, brothers and I if we would like to go out again in late summer, to which we all

agreed. On fishing trip number two, however, there were whitecaps in the bay which should have been a red flag. When I brought the whitecaps in the bay to the attention of the captain, he told me, "Don't you worry. It'll be a sheet of glass out there." Well "sheet of glass" my foot. Ten minutes on the water and I was green behind the gills, and held onto a toilet for a few hours, and when I thought there was nothing left, I made my way to the sofa. By this time, my brother Tim was on the other couch. I looked at him and he said, "Dan, there's some liverwurst in there for you." At which I held onto a toilet for another hour. That was some 25 years ago, and I have not gone fishing since.

Given the fact the Gospel recorded at least two storms on the Sea of Galilee, once when Our Blessed Lord was asleep on a cushion, and the other while Our Blessed Lord was walking on the water, I am sure the conditions faced by the Apostles Peter, Andrew, James and John, all of whom fished for a living, were far worse than my last excursion on that yacht so many years ago. If Our Blessed Lord offered me an "out" that fateful afternoon while hugging a toilet, I would have hopped off that yacht in a heartbeat, I would have abandoned my fishing rod and followed Jesus as did Peter and Andrew,

who had abandoned their fishing nets. I would have abandoned my father as James and John abandoned theirs. Dad, I would much rather be a fisher of men. I would much rather hold on to Our Blessed Lord than hold on to a toilet.

Perhaps it was not so much the adverse work or conditions of being a fisherman that the Apostles hated, as much as it was life in general that was one big cross too heavy to bear:

1. to live life with no hope of the afterlife as we understand it now; in the Jewish mindset of the day, the best they could hope for was Sheol – life after death that was pleasant, but not with God;
2. to carry all the crosses of life and carry them believing that God gave them their crosses as a punishment for some unknown sin they may have committed – Lord, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Lord, who did what to cause this man to be blind?

Like Peter, Andrew, James and John, you and I have been through periods of life when you just want to abandon the nets and go. 1996, St. Joseph's in Toms River: 5500 families, 2000 kids in the school, 800 bed hospital, county jail, 4 nursing homes, with just another part time priest besides me. Boom! Depression! I had to abandon the nets of active ministry to take a leave of absence and figure it all out. So Is there a little bit of

Peter, Andrew, James and John in you? Because there is a little bit of Peter, Andrew, James and John in me.

This morning's gospel mentions just four of the twelve apostles: Peter, Andrew, James and John. Peter is mentioned in scripture the most, a total of 195 times. We learned last week that Peter was Cephas, the rock.

1. Peter was a leader; when Peter went fishing they all went fishing.
2. Peter was courageous. Jesus said follow me and Peter up and followed him.
3. Peter was boastful for he swore up and down he would never betray our Blessed Lord.
4. Peter had a deep sense of sin, for he begged our Lord to leave him because of his unworthiness.
5. Peter became deeply attached to Our Blessed Lord, for when Jesus asked them if they would leave him, Peter questions where they could possibly go.
6. Peter was emphatic, swinging swords, protesting that the Lord should wash his feet, cursing and swearing for Our Blessed Lord, and cursing and swearing that he even knew Our Blessed Lord.
7. Peter denied him three times and later renewed his love for him three times.

Is there a little bit of Peter in you? Because there's a little bit of Peter in me.

Andrew, the brother of Peter, is mentioned eight times in the gospels. Andrew is the great introducer:

1. introducing Peter to Our Blessed Lord last week;
2. introducing the boy with the barley loaves and fish to Our Blessed Lord at the feeding of the 5000;
3. introducing the Greeks to our Lord when they asked to see him;
4. Andrew was the younger brother, always overshadowed by Peter, always left out of the crowd as Peter James and John were of the select few.

Is there a little bit of Andrew in you because there is a little bit of Andrew in me?

Like Peter and Andrew, James and John were brothers.

1. And temper. Yes they had a temper, for they were known as sons of thunder.
2. They insisted on burning a Samaritan village because they refused to receive our Lord.
3. But the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Typical Jewish mother, "Lord grant that these sons of mine sit one at your right and one at your left when they enter your kingdom."
4. James, and John, two of the famous three with Peter:

- a. to witness the Transfiguration
  - b. to witness the raising of the daughter of Jairus
  - c. to witness the Agony in the Garden.
5. James, pushed from the steeple, the first apostle-martyr for the Lord
6. John:
- a. the disciple "whom Jesus loved,"
  - b. the one who leaned against Jesus' chest at the Last Supper
  - c. the disciple who stood at the foot of the cross with Our Blessed Mother while Jesus was crucified
  - d. the disciple who took Mary into his care
  - e. James and John loved the Lord so much.

Is there a little bit of James and John in you? Because there is a little bit of James and John in me?

If you're overwhelmed by life in general that is one big cross too heavy to bear, follow Peter, Andrew, James and John and hold on to Our Blessed Lord – because there is a little bit of Peter, Andrew, James and John in you and me.