

St. Andrews Day 2020



Are we really expected to be like Awesome Andrew? Fr. Mike.

Collect

Almighty God, who didst give such grace unto thy holy Apostle St. Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him **without delay: Grant unto us all, that we, being called by thy holy word, may **forthwith** give up ourselves obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

- **Romans 10.9 - end**
- **Matthew 4.18 - 22**

This brief story from Matthew is more symbolic than actual. We know that later they all returned to their boats, their fishing, and their family; So what seems to be the point?

Well, perhaps we need to look past the mere external acts presented and dig slightly deeper to examine the inner attitude required to follow Jesus...

Someone had to be first, and that person was Andrew. It is thanks to Andrew and his small band of friends in the first century, that the Gospel has spread with a global reach so that millions like us now believe in Jesus.

Is it different for us, or must we copy Awesome Andrew?

Does simply caring for others, working hard, and trusting God's guiding hand in all the ordinary things in our lives seem enough to cover the stipulated requirements set out in

Matthew? The path to our enlightenment may sit within another related question to ponder:

Q/What ‘nets’ do you need to leave in order to follow Jesus?

If there is a tangled net of material attachments, comfort zones and obstacles wound around your life which prevents free following, then are you honest enough to acknowledge them? Regardless of whether these nets might be (tightly or loosely) wound around your existence – does this matter? The short answer is ‘yes’ because Christian Spirituality is broad. It is much more than a personal relationship (‘Jesus and me’); because although Matthew hints that it includes Jesus, the individual *and* those whom He sends us, St.Paul actually spells it out:

‘For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.’ (Rom.10.12)

Conclusions

Firstly, identify your own tangled net(s) and sort them out, **‘forthwith.’** Thereafter, your bespoke version of following Jesus will be efficient, enabling you to **‘fulfil’** as our Collect suggests **‘holy commandments’** required of a practicing Christian. The individual cost of our discipleship will differ, but the *process* will not. Furthermore, if we wish to be a close follower, rather than an occasional one, we need to be clear about the nature and depth of our attraction to Jesus and his teaching. In real terms this will be determined by the nature of our prayer life in tandem with the depth of our engagement with Christian mission.

Secondly, we are the product of our decisions and have a faithful, life-long friend and guide in the form of Jesus Christ; *if* (and this is key) we let him be part of our journey.

Notice that God wants us to follow him, but not passively. He is asking us to join his wider mission '**...Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**'(v.18) which definitely requires effort, and may demand sacrifices along the way. This is something we have all signed up for - technically at our baptism, although more realistically at confirmation - and we are all uniquely called, so that wholesome life is brought to others.

Finally, we are asked to personify 'Good News' wherever we may be. Jesus recognises our raw material (God-given skills) and then redirects them to his higher purposes so that we can '**straightway**' serve other people through those skills.

[Following Christ therefore distils to an exercise in complete trust.](#)

The first disciples had no real idea where, when, how or even why they were expected to follow Jesus '**immediately,**' *yet they did so all the same*, and were rewarded with a liberating (life-changing) experience. We are promised the same experience today.

Awesome Andrew shows us how simple it is to achieve that, as the path to righteousness begins with a simple faith, prompting us, like him, to follow in equally simple trust. And that, as Andrew demonstrates by his response, is all there is to it?!

Andrew, Peter, James, and John gave an immediate response – however, if your reactions are somewhat more cautious, why not forensically examine '**without delay**' how slow your reactions are by reflecting upon what it might be that is holding you back...then talk to the Lord about it so he can truly untangle your particular net and set you free?

'As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!' (Rom.10.15)

Fr. Mike (Feast of St. Andrew, in 'lockdown 2' 2020)