**Santa Clara Mission Church—DISCIPLESHIP**

**3rd Sunday—January 22, 2023**

**Isaiah 8:23-9-3; 1Corinthians 1:10-13,17, Matthew 4:12-17**

Our culture is enthralled with the mystique of the Lone Ranger, that masked man, acting independently in the wild west, who ensures for the defenseless and powerless that justice is served. As he leaves his silver bullet calling card, everyone astonished, asks, “Who was this masked man?” We champion such fixers of righteousness who are larger than life Supermen and champion Superwomen.

Jesus, because of his divinity safety net could easily been a one-person, all-inclusive show. He refused.

In today’s dramatic gospel, Jesus calls Simon and Andrew, James and John to co-labor with him in mission. Later, Mary Magdalen, the Samaritan woman, Martha and Mary advance his ministry. Jesus calls even you and me. Jesus did not embrace a rugged individualist ministry. He created a collaborative, empowering ministry of disciples and community. As Catholics, we refer to this community as Church. Vatican II defines Church as the entire People of God. We all have a vita part and gift to contribute. The ministry of team player Jesus is only effective with those who drop their nets and follow, as engaged participants, as disciples.

Have any of you watched National Geographic’s *Life Below Zero*? In the frozen tundra of wilderness Alaska, rugged individualists chop down tress, fight off grizzly bears, fish for salmon and hunt moose to eek out a living. While some seek a secluded pathway, and yes, even Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and nights, he did not remain there. Jesus’s ministry, teaching and healing occurred in the city, the marketplace, homes, and the temple.

What is the subtext message that Jesus communicates in today’s gospel? “I can’t do ministry alone. I need help. In fact, I need your help.” You might retort: “Hold on, Padre, it is Simon and Andrew, James and John that Jesus calls.” We must not fall into a literalist trap. This is the seductive, living word of God. Our task is to appropriate and translate the gospel into our daily lives and world.

As disciples we are called to pray with Jesus, and more importantly to labor, baptize, evangelize, and heal all the areas of life where we live and work. How effective a disciple of Jesus will I be this day? This week? How will I be his hands, his voice, his healing, his forgiveness, his compassion in serving others?

Jesus is crying out in today’s gospel: “I need help. I need you.” Let us pray for the grace to labor with Jesus as his proactive, engaging disciples in the Lord’s vineyard. Jesus is our life-giving vine. We the branches to manifest his power and gifts. By calling Simon and Andrew, Jesus is saying that he needs productive branches and disciples

This day, this week, we pray for the grace to labor with Jesus as his dedicated disciples to heal our cities, schools, health care, government and workplaces. Jesus is asking us, you and me, to continue his mission. In his footsteps, may we boldly do so with imagination, courage, and always with his grace.