

January 13, 2024



Daily Reflections

FOLLOW ME!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Today's Gospel

Jesus went out along the sea. All the crowd came to him and he taught them. As he passed by, he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus, sitting at the customs post. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed Jesus. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners sat with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. Some scribes who were Pharisees saw that Jesus was eating with sinners and tax collectors and said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus heard this and said to them, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

MARK 2:13-17

Reflection

This short passage from the Gospel of Mark is compelling if we break it down

into small parts. First, just picturing the scene of Jesus walking along the sea can seem peaceful, almost blissful, until you read the next sentence where the “crowds” came to him. This is a helpful reminder to remain open to encountering the other, to be generous with my availability to be with others. This has to be done in a balanced manner, as Jesus consistently demonstrated by taking time to pray in places away from the crowds. At the same time, he always returned to his ministry of teaching, preaching, dining, and being with the people.

The next two sentences seem a bit abrupt as Jesus says to Levi, “follow me”; and Levi immediately arises and follows Jesus. My sense is that Levi did not aimlessly follow Jesus; it seems there had been forethought and reflection on who Jesus was and what he was saying as he moved from place to place. I sense that Levi had to have been contemplating who Jesus might be for him prior to this encounter since he immediately responded to Jesus’ invitation to follow him. This is speculation on my part, though it provides a platform from which to reflect on our own lives today.

I’m challenged with this thought - am I ready for such an invitation from God? God? Has my prayer, contemplation, and reflection given me the grounding I need to be ready and alert for God’s invitations in my life at a moment’s notice? Do I, and will I, follow as readily as Levi?

Finally, this passage ends with Jesus being questioned about who he is associating with because he dines with sinners and tax collectors. This part of the gospel challenges me to reflect on who might I be excluding from my life without consciously realizing it. Who might I invite to the table of my life even though they might live or think differently than me? These are compelling questions to ponder because it can help me see where I might be excluding the very people God is inviting me to encounter.



Graphic by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

For Pondering

- Who am I following? Is it God? My prayers, thoughts, and actions can give clarity to this question! Am I ready to follow God no matter the invitation?
- Who might I be called to invite to the table of my life?

For Prayer

O God of inclusive love,

*may our hearts remain open to your call in our lives.
May we be ready to follow you this day in unexpected ways
when we experience your call.
May all who seek acceptance and welcome
find a place at the table of the Lord and the tables of our lives.
Amen.*

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