

- *What are you looking for?*
- *Come and You will see.*
- *You will be called Cephas.*
- *What are you looking for?*
 - These are the first words Jesus speaks in the Gospel of John. Two disciples had been sent to Jesus by John the Baptist who had just admitted, not once but twice, that he almost missed Jesus as the Messiah.
 - It's easy to understand why. Jesus had come from poverty, with no name or status; Jesus comes quietly, gently, peacefully; with a tender question for those disciples who were following shyly, awkwardly, hesitantly, attracted to Jesus but unsure of who He was or what they wanted: *What are you looking for?*
 - Like Andrew and his unnamed friend, we're searching and we've come to Jesus, perhaps hesitantly, shyly, awkwardly. We know we want something but we're unsure of what. It may be Jesus but we're not sure how He fits into our lives.
 - Perhaps we're sure of our attraction but find it difficult to commit, difficult to go further, difficult to change our hearts, habits and lives.
 - Or, perhaps we're like Samuel from our first reading: confused by the messages we are receiving, our untrained ear, mishearing or, hearing correctly but misattributing the source.

- In any case, like Andrew, we have questions, things we don't know, even if we're not quite sure how to ask them, or think them silly, or unanswerable.
- Each and every one of us has different questions, different searches for meaning, different routes we are traveling. But the answer for each questions, finding meaning, the destination of each route is always the same: Jesus Christ.
- *Come and You will see.*
 - These are the second words Jesus speaks in John's Gospel. Jesus doesn't try to answer the question of Andrew and his friend. He doesn't fill their heads with doctrine or rules. He doesn't tell them how to live, or what they need to change. He doesn't tell them what to read or do.
 - He simply invites. He invites them to encounter Him, to come into His presence. Whatever their questions, awkwardness, and hesitancy: Jesus simply invites: *Come and you will see.*
 - Whatever the questions, however we get there, however hesitant, awkward or shy we are, Jesus invites us with the same words. *Come and you will see.*
 - Jesus does not immediately try to answer all of our questions, nor does He invite us not to a physical place. Rather He invites us to come closer, to encounter Him. Jesus gently invites us to put aside fear and any hesitation we have, simply to come closer to Him.

- Jesus wants to share with us the love and mercy of our Heavenly Father, not because we we're perfect but precisely because we're not. Jesus wants us to know the delight God takes in us, not because we we're good, but because God created us in His image and likeness and knows us full well, even and including the darkness in our hearts and the sin in our lives. To encounter Christ is to step into the perfect love that God has for us.
- A true encounter with Christ, experiencing the love of our Heavenly Father, not in some general way but for ME, this experience gives me a new perspective. A true encounter with Jesus Christ launches a whole new reality. It's more than believing in Jesus or saying He is Lord.
 - In a true encounter, we seek to come closer to Jesus, to commit ourselves to Him through prayer: both quiet daily prayer and through the public celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.
 - Then we seek to “see” what Jesus is all about, to hear His words. We learn more about Him and His Church in the Bible, how Christ calls us to act.
 - Then, perhaps, hardest of all, we offer our will, showing openness to be formed in His image and likeness, to be shaped into His disciples.

- *You will be called Cephas.*
 - Though the invitation of Jesus and their encounter with Him, Andrew and his unnamed friend are changed. Proof comes in Simon's new name.
 - These are the third words that Jesus Speaks in John's Gospel after Andrew, changed by his time with the Lord, his encounter with Christ has run back home, eager and excited to tell his brother, Simon: We have found the Messiah.
 - Peter comes along, probably attracted by Andrew's enthusiasm as much as by the content of Andrews's message. Simon comes to Jesu and is immediately renamed Peter, which means Rock, bigger and better than the Hollywood adventure star with the same name.
 - Peter's strength is not borne of muscles but of his passion and love for Christ. Granted, Peter isn't perfect and Jesus will need to shape and inform and reshape and reform Peter's passion and love, even after He has Risen from the dead.
 - But the Rock of Peter's faith in Jesus is the foundation for the Church. Peter's faith will be tested; Peter will have to struggle. The journey of Andrew and Peter will be filled with misunderstanding, fear, confusion, pain, and doubt.
 - But this faith, this closeness with Jesus will also bring them the Father's love and mercy in a radical new way, along with forgiveness, hope, strength and guidance. Eventually, they reach the fullness of their journey with Christ: eternal life with God in Heaven.

- As with Peter, God has given us a name as well. It happened at our baptism and like Andrew and Peter, Jesus wants to draw us close into our own personal encounter.
- Like them, if we truly encounter Christ, we will be changed. Jesus invites Andrew and his unnamed friend not just for themselves but for that they will do following the encounter, namely that they will run and tell others. Jesus draws us close so He can send us out.
- It's what Saint Paul is talking about in our second reading:
 - Our bodies are members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. In other words, we house and are called to share God's presence.
 - This reading is often used to remind us to be physically healthy, to take care of our bodies, that God might be able to work within and through us.
 - But this second reading should also remind us that we house God's presence as profoundly as the Temple in Jerusalem or the Tabernacle behind me. Saint Paul reminds us that our bodies allow us to share God's love with others, not merely to tell them about Jesus Christ but to offer them the same love of the Father Jesus seeks to give to us.
- Like Andrew and his unnamed friend, and then like Peter and the others, we are called to share our encounter with Jesus. After we have come and seen, we are called to Go and share. Like Andrew and Peter and the others, we are called to proclaim the Good News, share the love we have received, not only with those who deserve it but with each and every one we encounter.

- Like them, we may be unsure of what to say or to do, of how to follow Jesus, how to join Him on the journey. Like them, we will experience misunderstanding, fear, confusion, pain, and doubt.
- But if we stick close to Jesus, if we allow Jesus in our encounter to shape and inform and reshape and reform our love, we will also experience the Father's love and mercy in a radical new way, forgiveness, hope, strength and guidance, perhaps even reach the fullness of that journey: eternal life with God in Heaven.

- *What are you looking for? Come and You will see. You will be called Cephas.*
- Search. Encounter. Journey. These are the three steps to any relationship with Jesus Christ.
- We got the first one down, don't we. We've got all kinds of unanswered questions about the big issues of life, unfinished searches for meaning and purpose, routes to happiness filled with detours, pit stops, and delayed beginnings. Still, we have an emptiness in our hearts which we can't seem to fill.
- And we can't quite seem to move on the other two steps, to Encounter Christ and to Journey with Jesus. These we aren't so sure about. And that's why I encourage you to come to our mission.
- The mission is focused on facilitating the encounter with Jesus and then on following Him on the journey. Mr. Ron Huntly, whose job title at Saint Benedict's parish where he worked was the Director of Making People Awesome, is the most dynamic speaker I know, filled with passion, enthusiasm, and JOY.

- With this mission, he wants to enhance our encounter with Christ and then help us along on the journey to follow Jesus. Whether you're new to faith, or a life-long believer, this mission will help you to grow, lean into fear and doubt, and feel more comfortable to “Come and See.” and then Go and tell.
- He wants to help us answer as Samuel eventually did: *Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.*