

## **TAKE TIME OUT - Pastoral Retreat**

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### **Monthly Message – February 2021**

Reverend Janice A. Morgan MA. BSc.

#### **Scripture: Mark 1:16-20** *Calling the first disciples*

<sup>16</sup>As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea-for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup>And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me and I will make you fish for people." <sup>18</sup>And immediately they left their nets and followed Him. <sup>19</sup>As He went a little farther, He saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup>Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed Him.

Jesus was in Capernaum, the largest fishing village around the Sea of Galilee. Those listening were either fishermen or connected to it in some way. They were just ordinary folk working hard at making a living. Something different about Jesus drew them to take time out & listen to what He was saying. Simon & Andrew may have heard about Jesus but would not have known Him. Yet, waist deep casting their nets, they just left all to 'follow' Him, seemingly without hesitation! The same would apply to James & John engaged in essential work for their livelihood; yet, they too just left all, seemingly without a word! Did Simon & Andrew just leave their nets in the sea to float away? Did James & John not even glance back at Zebedee? *Would we leave our work to follow a stranger 'immediately', without looking back?* Yet, this was the instant response of the first four disciples. The conviction of God's presence may not be understandable but when felt is unmistakable. The conviction of our hearts is unpredictable & liable to outside influence but the call of God surpasses worldly understanding. *Might God be calling you to 'follow' His Son?*

The first 'followers' of Christ felt something in their heart that was 'other' & made an instant change within. This reminds me of John Wesley's experience- 24<sup>th</sup> May 1738: "*About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.*" Whilst Wesley had the benefit of knowing Who Jesus was, these first 'followers' had to discover Him. They had to grow in faith just as all believers do. It took time for the full realisation of who Jesus was and what His purpose on earth was to be, yet they followed Him without understanding why. Some need to cross every 'T' & dot every 'I' before they can make a decision, which is wise when entering into a business contract. But God does not seek to negotiate or barter for our business! God invites us into a covenant signed with the blood of His Son & freely given to those who respond in faith. Salvation is not of this world; our soul is not a product to be traded for profit. God calls to our soul & Jesus invites us to 'follow' Him into a relationship of eternal life!

Scripture tells us who Jesus is & what His purpose is but we still need to take time to listen to what He says. If we do not listen how can we hear, comprehend, believe or find faith to respond? Listening involves focus on the one speaking not on how we might respond! Once we have heard we need time to reflect on how it might change us or others, and what we may need to do. Following Jesus is a journey of faith to discover who we are and what our purpose might be. Jesus teaches God's Word of Truth, who He is, & where He might be in

our everyday experiences. Faith builds trust over time, developing roots that grow deep into our spirit. God's Word cannot be consumed like a takeaway!

Technology seemingly solves all: computers calculate; search engines instantly find information; artificial intelligence claims to predict speech & action; machines answer phones & record programs. But, human beings are not infallible & machines are only as good as those operating them! Every person has a soul, something a machine can never have. Worldly promises tempt us to gamble; to place our bets & offer up our souls to chance! Following the world leads only to disappointment. To follow Jesus offers freedom from worldly dependence & guarantees life into eternity. *Why gamble when we have a guarantee?*

Yours in Christ Jesus, Janice

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**Poem: THE CALL** ©Janice Morgan 1990

The Lord is calling us today,  
His gentle whisper comes our way,  
We hear – will we obey?  
Jesus calls to us and He cries for us,  
Will we come or will we stay?

We live our lives as best we can,  
To follow Jesus is our plan,  
We struggle on our own.  
Shall we let Him come, shall God's will be done,  
Shall our lives be ours or His?

Jesus said, "I am the Light,  
In darkness I will shine out bright,  
My love will touch your heart.  
Will you turn from sin, will you let Me in,  
Can I turn your life around"?

He loves us all the Scriptures say,  
He died and took our sins away,  
Can we believe this Truth?  
Can we just let go, tears will surely flow,  
On our knees we softly pray.

We feel our heart, its beating fast,  
We've given Jesus all our past,  
Repentance is the key.  
We can face all strife; we have found new life,  
Jesus' Spirit lives in us.  
Jesus' Spirit lives in us!

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**February Calendar:**

<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup></b>	St Brigid's Day
<b>Sunday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	St Valentines Day
<b>Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	Shrove Tuesday
<b>Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	Ash Wednesday
<b>Sunday 21<sup>st</sup></b>	First Sunday in LENT
<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup></b>	Second Sunday in LENT