



**THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**

“So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.” What did Zebedee think about all of this? His sons and his partners, James and John, suddenly left their post and followed Jesus. So there he stood in the boat with a crew of employees, but not one of his sons. We can’t help but wonder whether Zebedee was in favor of this promise that his heirs would become “fishers of men.”

Most likely, this event was the cause of some familial tension. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus instructs us to love and serve others for the love of God. But the Lord also makes it clear that our devotion to him is meant to trump our devotion to anything—or anyone—else. For our part, we are called to allow this divine allegiance to exist in those we love, even when it means a sacrifice for us as well. Parents for example, like Zebedee, are called to encourage their children to follow the Lord’s call. A son or daughter’s vocation to religious life certainly exemplifies this kind of sacrifice for a parent who might have had a different plan in mind.

But in truth every son and daughter has a vocation from God and parents have the opportunity to support and assist their children as they seek to hear and follow God’s special plan for their lives.

We don’t know for sure how Zebedee responded to the vocation of his sons, but we know that James and John were counted among the Twelve Apostles and that their devotion and dedication helped to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Regardless of what he might have thought as he stood in that boat, we can be quite sure that looking back now, Zebedee can rejoice heartily in the choice of his sons to leave their nets and follow Christ.

**INSPIRATION OF THE WEEK**

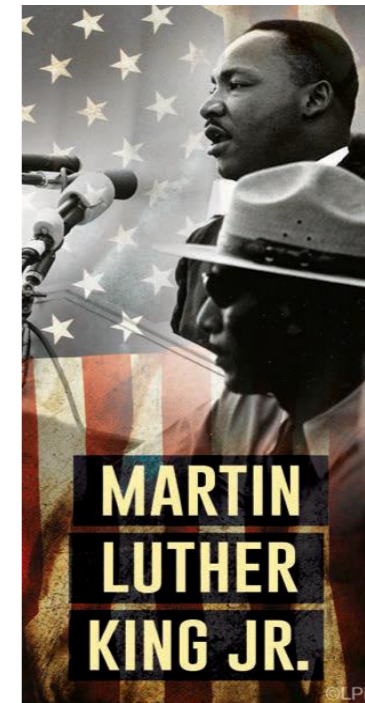
Sometimes it is difficult to hear God’s call. We are trained to listen attentively and to hear many things, but spiritual ones are often missed. God is calling us all of the time. He is calling us to drink deeply of the well of life and not get distracted by the superficial and short-lasting things we choose to cling to. Have we ever given a true spiritual life and relationship with God a chance? Jesus says to us today, “Come, and you will see.” May we take Jesus up on his invitation and like Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, be able to exclaim: “We have found the Messiah.”



**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be celebrated around the world 18 to 25 January 2018, on the theme "Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power" (Exodus 15:6).

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was first proposed in 1908 as an observance within the Roman Catholic Church. Since the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948, many other Christian denominations around the world have come to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY**

In Catholic social tradition, “rights” correspond to the treatment every person deserves not because of background or individual merit, but by virtue of being created in the image and likeness of God. As followers of Christ, we are called to a concern for our brothers and sisters.

This means that, in acknowledging rights, we also acknowledge responsibilities. St. John Paul II writes, “every man is his ‘brother’s keeper’, because God entrusts us to one another” (*Evangelium Vitae*, 19). In our complicated world, it can be easy to get overwhelmed by public policy. However, we are not exempt from engaging in public life. Today, we remember that we are all called to work to ensure that social structures uphold human dignity and support true human flourishing.