

EPIPHANY 2 – 2022
Gen 28:10-22
1Cor 12:4-11
Jn 1:43-51

In the first chapter of St John's Gospel, John the Baptist describes himself as the voice crying in the wilderness. He describes Jesus as the Lamb of God after which Jesus describes himself as the Son of Man.

Disciples were beginning to gather around Jesus so he decided to go to Galilee. He called Philip to follow him and Philip found Nathaniel or Bartholomew and told him that they had found Jesus from Nazareth who is God's Chosen One. Nathaniel is sceptical that God would choose somebody from an insignificant place. Philip then acted as the perfect evangelist and said, "Come and See." He invited Nathaniel not only to meet Jesus, but to experience him. Jesus described Nathaniel as a righteous and guileless Jew, and as they had never previously met, this was lifechanging for Nathaniel who acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus went on to say that Nathaniel would see even greater things than having his character read.

Jesus reminded the disciples of a story about Jacob that would be familiar to them. Jacob was the founding father of Israel even though he was a devious villain who deceived his father, cheated his brother out of his inheritance and when he married, he robbed his father-in-law. Even so, he longed to know God. On his way to look for a wife he fell asleep and dreamt he saw a ladder with its feet on the ground but reaching up to heaven. God's angelic messengers travelled up and down on the ladder carrying Jacob's flawed character up to heaven and bringing God's presence from heaven to stand beside him, to remain with him, protect him and keep the promise God had made to him.

Jesus told his disciples that they would see the reality of Jacob's dream. They would see angels coming and going to heaven, not on a ladder but on Jesus himself. The angels would lift up to God the needs of self-centred humanity and bring down from heaven the love, mercy and truth of God. These things are reconciled in Jesus because Jesus transforms our selfish nature.

Because of this, those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord are commissioned to proclaim the Good News to others that Jesus is the Messiah. Disciples are also evangelists. Philip gives us the model we should follow. Philip announced the good news to Nathaniel. When Nathaniel was sceptical about it, Philip didn't tell Nathaniel that he would go to hell because he was a heretic. He didn't tell Nathaniel what to do, he brought him to Jesus.

This is our model. Announce the good news and then invite others to come and see. Invite them, don't just tell or even encourage them. Bring them, sit with them, journey with them, mentor them. Share meals with them, study with them. Today's epistle tells us that in the Church we all possess different gifts. All these gifts, skills and talents are God given and so are of equal value and importance.

Our culture is at best indifferent and at worst hostile to the Catholic faith. We have brought some of this upon ourselves, but that doesn't explain everything.

In this situation it is tempting to keep quiet, don't rock the boat and opt for a so-called peaceful life. Yet there are still those who are curious to know why lay people still believe in God and practice their faith. They want to know what makes us tick. There is still a need to tell others the truth.

Times are not easy for us, but they were considerably more hostile for those first disciples. The Church of the Acts of the Apostles had to raise funds, send out Apostles and suffer real persecution. Yet the Church grew because people resonated with the Truth. It can be done. Let's be courageous and invite others to, 'Come and see.'

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