

3rd Sunday after the Epiphany
Grace Episcopal Church, St John's Church
Rev Brian C Justice

Psalm 27.1, 5-13
Isaiah 9.1-4
1 Corinthians 1.10-18
Matthew 4.12-23

Let Go

O God of Life
you are not tame.
You are free and wild.
Give us the gift of abandonment.
Amen.

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Let go.
That's the Way.
Let go.

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I suspect we don't usually think about it like that though.

When we think about following the Way of Jesus, we might think,
Do this, do that.
Say this, say that.
Or, worse, believe this, believe that.

But maybe that's not the Christian Way. At least, maybe that's not how it begins.

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In today's Gospel, the deep wisdom of the Way is hidden in plain sight.

As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Peter and Andrew, casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And he said to them, follow me. Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

What strikes you in this text?

Perhaps, the charisma of the call. The Master called the disciples to a new life. Perhaps, the readiness of the response. The disciples followed the Master.

But there is something else. Something in between the call and the response.

“They left their nets.” ... “They left their nets.”

On the one level, Peter and Andrew left their nets because they were fishermen. Fishermen have nets. They left their fishing nets behind to follow Jesus, to begin new life with him.

On the other level, Peter and Andrew left their nets because ... because they were human beings. And to be human is to have nets.

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We live within systems that teach us – and tempt us – to catch as much as we can. Our politics, our economics, our technological culture ... these are the (seemingly) all-powerful nets that help us catch, catch, catch as much as we can.

But then the question becomes, what is really happening here?
Are we using our nets or are our nets using us?

I suspect, much of the time, *we* are caught in the nets of politics, of economics, of technology, of the cultural systems that bind us. *And we feel caught.*

Is this the Way? Is this the life we really want?

All of the great spiritual Masters of the world’s religious traditions – and, for us, above all, Jesus and Mary, John the Baptist, the saints and mystics and martyrs of the ages – teach us something else.

Let go.
Let go.

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Of course, dying is the Great Letting Go. But ...

Our Way is to practice the Great Letting Go *now*. Not later.

Our Way is to practice dying *now*. Not later.

Dying to ignorance.

Dying to illusion.

Dying to indifference.

Dying to an ethos that tells us catch, catch, catch, cling, cling, cling.

Dying to any net that catches us and takes away our life.

We practice letting go now ... we practice dying now so that we might *live* now.

The Master said, I came that you might have life and have it more abundantly.
(John 10.10) So ...

Let's leave our nets behind and follow the Way of the Master in the new life of abandonment and abundance where, like the Master, we let go of what we don't need, of what we don't really even want.

Let's not be tame. Let's be free and wild.

Like Peter and Andrew.

Like the Master.

Let go.

That's the Way.

Let go.

Amen.