

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Year

## Year B

### *Answering God's Call.*

*Christ calls each of us by name.  
In this celebration we listen to what he has to say to us,  
preparing to use in his service  
the body that he has given us for the glory of God.  
We say with him, 'This is my body which is given up for you.'*

(Readings: 1 Samuel 3: 3-10, 19. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.  
1 Corinthians 6: 13-15, 17-20. Your bodies are members making up the body of Christ.  
John 1: 35-42. They saw where he lived, and stayed with him.)

Today's Gospel introduces us to the Apostle Andrew. – In the entire New Testament Andrew is mentioned only twelve times, and six of those were merely to tell us that he was the brother of Simon Peter. It's almost as if the writers were afraid that we would not know who he was. It seemed that his own name didn't carry enough weight. And yet, he was the first of the apostles to have his name linked with that of Jesus.

Andrew wasn't as well-known as his more famous brother. Even so, the one thing that Andrew can teach us is that there is honour in taking second place. He wasn't a brilliant theologian. Nor was he an eloquent orator. – If he ever wrote a line, or preached a single sermon, we are not told about it. – He was just a simple fisherman, an ordinary person. Yet Jesus chose to make Andrew his apostle.

If we could look into the Lord's storehouse of valuables, we would probably be surprised at the apparent insignificance of the things we would see. For example we would find a couple of small copper coins, once belonging to a poor widow, who had given them away, though they were all that she had. And we would find five barley loaves and two fish, the lunch box of a family, which a peasant boy donated to Andrew and which was eventually to feed five thousand people. There would also be a broken alabaster jar which once belonged to Mary of Bethany, who in an act of impetuous devotion, broke it open and poured its contents on the head of Jesus. And we would find a cup of water and underneath the caption, 'Even a cup of water given in my name will not lose its reward.' Jesus had an affinity with ordinary things and ordinary people.

When we study the little that we do know about Andrew we discover that the ordinary things he did led to the achievement of extraordinary things.

You could make a case that Andrew's position was the most difficult among the apostles. Right from the start he had a close association with Peter, James and John, who together with Andrew were the first four followers of Jesus. And it was from these four that Jesus chose his inner circle of apostles. But for some reason Andrew was left out.

One day Jesus went into the home of a little girl who had died, and he brought her back to life. To witness this event, he took with him Peter, James and John. – Andrew was left out. On another occasion, Jesus went up the mountain of Transfiguration and there, talked with Moses and Elijah. Again he took with him Peter, James and John. – Andrew was left out. On the night of his greatest agony, when Jesus went deeper into the garden to pray, he took with him Peter James and John. And again Andrew was left out.

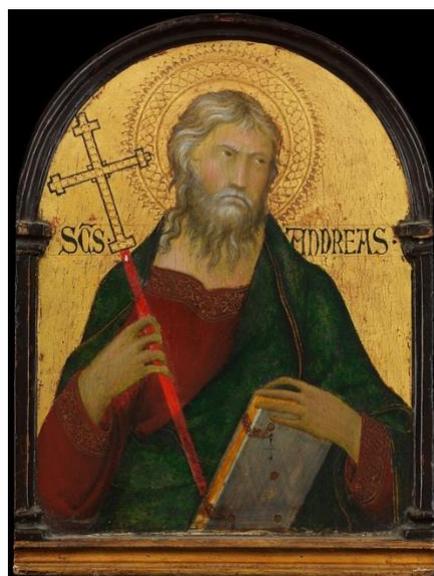
We don't know why Andrew was left out, but here we witness Andrew's extraordinary strength of spirit. If he ever suffered one single pang of envy, there is no indication of it in the gospel records. There was simply no room for petty jealousy in him.

Andrew appreciated that Jesus had the freedom to choose his special friends as he pleased, each one chosen for a particular purpose, according to his talents. Andrew had the courage to be himself, to do his own work in his own way.

Three times in the New Testament we see Andrew in action, and he is either introducing people to Jesus or helping out in a situation. This tells us he must have been a likeable person. The first time Andrew is mentioned, he is bringing his brother Simon and introducing him to Jesus. The second time he persuades a boy to give to Jesus the food he is carrying. Little did they realise that with it, Jesus would feed a multitude. And the third time we find Andrew reaching across racial boundaries to befriend a group of Greeks who wanted to see Jesus.

This was Andrew, always doing the simple task with quiet efficiency, always happy to take second place, never seeking the limelight, or personal recognition.

In every walk of life we need leaders who can inspire and motivate. But we also need the 'Back-Room-Boys' (and girls) without whom the leaders would not be able to operate. Andrew was most definitely in the background. And Jesus needed his skills just as much as he needed the skills of his brother Peter.



We thank you, blessed St. Andrew, for teaching us there is dignity in taking second place.