

"I'm going fishing"

May 6, 2015

Fr. Keith Streifel

Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen. Not like fishermen around here, they lived on a big enough lake with enough fish that they could do it for a living, not just as guides either. They sold the fish they caught. Three years earlier, a wandering carpenter turned rabbi stopped by their boats and told them to follow him -- this they did. He also told them that he would make them fishers of men - this is important for the story now.

Then things came to a big grinding halt in the following department. The Rabbi is gone, not just left, either. He is gone as in: crucified, died, and buried. Also rose from the dead and not yet ascended. The obvious question is, "Now what?"

The answer is not obvious. "I'm going fishing." After three years of not fishing at home, this sounds like a good option. That's when the Rabbi shows up to talk about fishing and shepherding. That's when "you can't go home again" takes on it's real meaning. That's when having become fishers of men means that being a fisherman is only a hobby after this. And other things - nets, boats, companions, to name a few - have to be left behind again.

We think of ourselves as lots of things, fishermen, housekeepers, students, and so on. A wandering carpenter turned rabbi stopped by and told us to follow him. Forty years ago, three years ago, forty days ago, just yesterday, and again first thing this morning, we began a new and more intense following of the Rabbi. Rabbi means teacher. Rabbi means great one. In this case, Rabbi means God Incarnate, Second Person of the Trinity, and Image of what we are to be.

Our following continues. But whatever we do, we can't go back to what we were. If we try, we will be dissatisfied. The Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord changes everything it touches. If we have lived Lent, the Mass, our daily prayer, the Scriptures, if we have followed him with any love at all, we are changed. There are things we must leave behind. Whether our Lent has been long or short, the question of "now what?" cannot be answered after Easter with "I'll just go back to what I was doing before."