

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany – 15 January 2017

## John 1:29-42

One of my favourite times in school when I was just a little kid, was our weekly trip to the school library. We would walk single file down the hall and I would be doing my very best not to skip and dance, moving to the front of the line. I was always the tallest and my last name started with a “w”, so whichever way they lined us up, I usually ended up at the back of the line. I hated being at the end of the line. I knew that when we got through those library doors we would all grab a square cut out of padded carpet and carry it to our favourite spot in the middle of the library. Once there we would flop down and get comfortable because the librarian was going to read us that next riveting chapter of the book of the month. I would dream all week of the characters and their escapades. I would imagine the places we heard about that I had never seen. I pretended to have conversations with the characters I met in the pages of that book that our librarian would read from each and every week. Story time in the library introduced me to the world of “what if ...” and “maybe that could happen ...” and “life is bigger than it seems” ... The library, the librarian with her story-telling voice, the hundreds of books just waiting for me to pick them up and peak inside them, opened for me a new sense of reality. My world might seem to be pretty small with a mom and dad and two sisters and a pet but in actuality my world was vast and unending with adventures and potential just waiting for me to “come and see”.

When I first became a teenager, my parents enrolled me in Confirmation classes with our Parish Priest, Fr John Blair. At first, I didn't want to go to church every Tuesday from 4 to 5:30 from September to May but it didn't take very long before I realized that Fr John was more like a grown-up version of my favourite librarians than he was the stodgy old parish priest I assumed he must be. Fr John would have all of 6 of us grumpy teenagers come into his office. He would pop his feet up on the desk and invite us to get comfortable. Then, when we all settled in with pop and snacks he would start telling us stories: stories about two teenagers named David and Johnathan; stories about a bunch of dirty, surly, crusty fishermen who would travel from place to place making everyone they met think twice about what they had already assumed to be true. Fr John would challenge us to pray – out loud, right there in front of God and everybody! He taught us about meditation and reading the Bible as an adventure instead of a rule book that was imposed on us “for our own good”. Over that 9 months of weekly confirmation preparation, Fr John invited us to “Come and see” in a thousand different ways. He opened a door for me that led to C.S. Lewis and the Song of Solomon. He pushed me off diving boards into pools of prayer and conversations with God. He encouraged me to listen for a new voice that I quickly came to recognize as that of the Holy Spirit, and amazingly enough, the Spirit kept whispering to me, “Come and see...”

Over the years, I have come to realize, and recognize, that all of those voices that have invited me to “come and see” have been messengers from God. Each and every one of them has been instrumental in helping me move closer and closer to God and further along this adventure, this amazing journey, that is the Christian life I am privileged to lead.

This week we begin our adventure, journey into the Epiphany season. Last Sunday we celebrated the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and the moment when Jesus was anointed to begin his earthly ministry. A new thing began in Jesus' baptism and that new thing invites all of us in as well, as we are invited, along with the original disciples, to "come and see".

Regardless of how long we have been Christians, whether we have been able to spend our entire lives faithfully following Jesus or sometimes stumbling along, picking ourselves up and trying yet again, or maybe we haven't yet discovered what all the fuss is about with this "Jesus guy", we are all in the same library or confirmation class, being issued the same invitation to come and see what all this is about.

It is about a God who loves us so very much. A God that does not dismiss us because we aren't perfect but rather who came down to be with us and help us to live up to the potential He created us to have in the first place. It is about a Saviour who lived as one of us, not to prove how great he was, but to prove to us that he truly understands what it is to be a human being. It is about a Spirit – divine and yet present to each and every one of us – a Spirit who lives and moves among us, encouraging us, breathing new life into us, allowing us to wander along our own path but always staying near to us for that moment when we realize that we really don't want, or need, to be on our own anymore.

In this season of Epiphany, we are given the gift of time – the time to listen for Jesus' voice on ordinary days whispering "come and see how much I love you because you are you." The time to listen for God's big voice echoing through the corridors of our lives saying, "come and see how wonderful it feels to stand in my presence and be loved entirely." The time to listen for the Holy Spirit laughingly calling you to "come and see and play" in a world filled with beauty and miracles and hope and joy and peace.

This Epiphany is also an opportunity for you to answer the call to "come and see" how God does indeed guide you through difficult times. It is a season in which you can recognize, if you come and see for yourself, the healing that Jesus shared with those who believed both then and now. It is a season in which you may be invited to come and see that the Holy Spirit has come to see you, right where you are.

We have begun a new year. We are entering a new era in our world. We are being invited to engage with God in new and more meaningful ways. God, through His Son Jesus Christ, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, is inviting all of us to "come and see" new things, unexpected things. We are being welcomed into a world of faith that is limited only by us, as God encourages us, even challenges us, to ask "what if ...", to recognize that yes, indeed, "maybe that could happen", and to see that "life really is bigger than it seems ..." Maybe this is the year that we will come to realize, and recognize, that all of those voices that have invited us to "come and see" have been

messengers from God. Each and every one of them has been instrumental in helping us move closer and closer to God and further along this adventure, this amazing journey, that is the Christian life we are privileged to lead. And maybe this will be the year when we will recognize that God is using *our* voices, calling out to others around us to “come and see”. Maybe there are people all around us that are yearning for the invitation to “come and see” and God is granting us the privilege of offering those invitations ...

What if we said to our children or grandchildren, come and see ...?

Maybe it could happen that our neighbour or friend might be interested in coming to see ...

It could be that the Holy Spirit might work through us to help another lonely or lost child of God see that life really is bigger than it seems ... and better too!

So together, let's come and see. Together, let's help others to come and see as well.