

## From the Desk of Our Pastor ...

### You Can Do Hard Things - Week Three

You can do hard things and that is no joke. I do not belong to an optimists' club, nor have I ever read a word of Norman Vincent Peale. My conviction comes solely from my own experience of God Almighty. There is no difference at all in my mind between what God did in the times of Jesus and His disciples and now. God is going to do something great with our church and each one of us has an important role to carry out to fulfill our destiny.



We began our series two weeks ago when we started with where it all begins, with our baptism. We have been reconfigured by the Holy Spirit in our baptism to do what is vastly beyond our natural ability. The challenge was to "become what we are." Last Sunday we saw how God encountered the boy Samuel and the encounter between Jesus with two of His disciples. The challenge is to make room in our busy lives for God to encounter us, and to respond, "Here I am." "Speak Lord, for I am listening." Have you thought about our adoration chapel? How about making an altar somewhere in your home? It is imperative that we make space and time with God, especially in these times of unparalleled anxiety.

In our Gospel reading for this Sunday, we find Jesus calling His disciples. They were fishermen, and fishing was all they knew. Jesus merely begins where they were and expands their very small base of knowledge and experience to epic proportions - fishing for men. The first step in this direction was to abandon their nets. We take this as our metaphor for the week. On one level, we must also abandon our nets, that is, to leave behind our notion of who we are. How do we define ourselves? Scientists? Businesspersons? Mothers? Whatever it is, this is not who we are primarily. We are missionary disciples; that is, we are on a mission that transcends our little world, and we are Jesus to everyone around us. Do we quit our jobs? Not necessarily, but we do expect Jesus to expand what we do like He did to the Galilean fishermen.

Following this same "fish" motif we find, in our Old Testament reading, God calling Jonah to preach repentance to the great Assyrian City Nineveh. How does one face God's outrageous expectations for us? Our almost universal response is to go the other direction like Jonah did. God would not let him "off the hook," so to speak, but sent the great fish to swallow him up, thus saving him from drowning. Down in the belly he had a remarkable change of mind. Considering the options, wouldn't it make more sense to simply "abandon our nets" like the disciples did than to be swallowed by a fish?

Dear brothers and sisters, there is no doubt about it. Jesus is calling us to do something very hard; to change the world around us. We must not wistfully give a thought or two about this and go back to our nets. Nor should we go the opposite direction like Jonah did. We must face our call head on. What is it that impedes our obedience? What keeps us from fulfilling our call? What fears smother the inner voice whispering great and wonderful things? This week's practical step for us to take is to go to reconciliation. Do a thorough self-examine and go to God with it. Using our net metaphor, what nets are we entangled with that keep us from fulfilling our true purpose in life? Obsession with politics? Our jobs? Our possessions? Our entertainment? Social media? [If you need help in you examine, look on our website at [SaintJoseph.cc/hard-things-3](http://SaintJoseph.cc/hard-things-3).]

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