

From the Desk of Our Pastor ...

You are Deputized by Christ!

There is a flow in this homily series, *You Can Do Hard Things*, that I hope you are getting. It all starts, as we saw in week 1, with our baptism where we are "reconfigured" by the Holy Spirit to accomplish things far beyond our natural ability. This remains mere potential until we own this power for our own, and "become what we are." We do this by setting aside space and time to hear the voice of God calling our name like young Samuel and follow Jesus home like the two disciples did (week 2). Last week we found Jesus calling the disciples from their fishing boats. He takes them as they are, mere fishermen, and expands their trade far above and beyond anything conceivable to them, fishers of men, or, in our language, "missionary disciples." They abandon their nets, their identities completely change, and nothing can be the same anymore.



The drama thickens even more this week. Jesus is with these fishermen in their hometown of Capernaum by the sea. He makes a spectacular splash by miraculous healings and exorcisms. But it is his teaching that comes to the fore here; it is said twice that He spoke as "one having authority," not like the scribes. We must not lose sight of the movement here that goes from the disciples "abandoning their nets" last week and "authority" this week. A missionary disciple is one who sees what Jesus sees and does what Jesus does. True, here Jesus is doing these things, but the expectation is that they will do the same. We see this clearly at their commissioning at the end of the Gospel. It comes down to authority.

Now, all of us know something of authority. As parents we have authority over our children. At work many of us are both under authority and in authority over others. Much of our authority is positional as parents or places in pecking orders. Such was the scribes' authority. The authority Jesus had was charismatic; it came directly from the Holy Spirit, supernatural. Everyone was amazed.

What is true about Jesus must be true about us. In fact, we can say that Jesus, in choosing His disciples, deputizes them. To deputize is to give one authority. In the old westerns, often the one made a deputy is usually not at all happy about it. However, his authority as deputy is essential to the good outcome. Our authority derives directly from Christ, and with this comes the charism of the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus meant when he told them He would make them "fishers of men."

My appointment as pastor here at Saint Joseph's is shocking to me. I have never had authority on such a scale. I know in my heart that I am here not because of anything I am in my own power. I am here because I have been "deputized" by God. But this is not about me; it is about you! I am here to equip you to do the work of the ministry. You have the authority to be a missionary disciple, to change the world around you. My greatest pleasure here at Saint Joseph is to see many of you on fire, doing things you would not dream of doing just a few years back. You know what you are about! You feel the authority God has given you!

Perhaps you are not quite there yet. If so, we want to help you see what God can do with you. As a practical step, look on our website and see what ministry opportunities there at SJCC. Pray about what God might be nudging you into. This is not just about "doing" but a gateway into experiencing the supernatural, seeing God at work through you. You are deputized by Christ; He has empowered you to do great things!

Father John
Pastor