

From the Desk of Our Pastor ...

Think Bigger!

We all come from somewhere. I happen to come from the moderate sized city of Lansing, which happens to be the capital of Michigan. Over the years as I grew up, my knowledge of the city expanded from my own immediate neighborhood, to neighboring neighborhoods, and then into the city itself. A hometown is a familiar place where we tend to feel comfortable; we know the people and connect deeply with places associated with memories of years gone by. We know that there is a larger world out there, but as it was famously said in the Wizard of Oz, "There's no place like home." Still, there comes a time in many of our lives where we must think bigger than our hometown.



For the disciples, their home was Capernaum. Jesus just broke into their lives and changed their whole way of thinking about themselves. They were no longer to be fishermen, but fishers of men. In other words, they were now men on a mission bigger than themselves and were about to see the world with its multitudes as God sees it, and to what will be a big surprise, actually do what Jesus does, the impossible. You see, Jesus did not simply perform exorcisms and healings to show off His power, or even for the sake of those suffering, but to demonstrate to his disciples the power that He will invest them with. He was "deputizing" them with authority. So it is for us, Jesus gives us a new identity and deputizes us to fulfill our mission in life.

Often I have seen with my mind's eye the scene before Peter's mother-in-law's house in the evening sun. Everyone in the town is crowding at the door. Jesus is curing the whole of Capernaum of its ills. Finally, the night overtakes them all and eventually all go to their homes. Before dawn Jesus wanders off into a deserted place to pray. The disciples realize He is gone and searches Him out. They encourage Him to go back to the town where He had made such a big splash the day before. Jesus informs them that he had finished His work there, and that they were leaving town. They were to move out into the nearby villages, and from there, the whole of Galilee. It was dawning upon the disciples that what they have gotten themselves into was far bigger than they thought! When we abandon our nets, we set upon a journey far from home. This is true whether we physically leave home or leave it metaphorically. We must think bigger!

Jesus here is compelled to leave Capernaum. We see the same with St. Paul in our readings of I Corinthians. No doubt, when he started out in his early studies, he had hopes of being a learned rabbi, perhaps in his hometown of Tarsus. But once he had freely embraced his call to discipleship, he could no longer "help himself." An "obligation" was imposed upon him to preach the Gospel that would take him miles and miles from his hometown. There is not one true disciple of Jesus Christ who has not been challenged to think bigger. As so it is with us at Saint Joseph. We may not leave town, but we are all charged with the mission of leaving our town far greater than it ever could be without each of us.

Father John
Pastor