

Pastor's Letter 01.29.21

Having had two recent arm surgeries I've had to relearn some basic tasks that I used to do automatically. Have you ever tried brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand? It's not as easy as it might sound! Or how about buttoning a button, tying your shoes, or buckling your belt? Everything takes more time and effort than it used to.

Unfortunately, I've also dropped and broken two of my wife's favorite Fiestaware dishes. Emptying the dishwasher with one hand be quite hazardous! If you run into her would you politely avoid this topic? Thanks in advance.

Learning how to do something new is a challenge. It forces us out of our comfort zones and routines. It might be something we wouldn't choose to learn, but rather something we're forced to do out of necessity. Change isn't easy, and old habits die hard.

Our recent scripture readings tell the story of Jesus calling his disciples to follow him and to learn how to "fish for people." And they do! The disciples' actions speak to Jesus's charisma, reputation, and to God's power. It speaks to their willingness to drop everything without hesitation. Deciding to follow Jesus meant leaving their livelihood, religion, and family; it meant facing the derision of those who thought they were nuts.

Thankfully for us, following Jesus doesn't usually require these kinds of sacrifices. Compared to the first disciples we have it pretty good! Unlike them, we have the freedom to worship without fear of persecution and death.

Our faith, however, DOES require us to learn how to go about things differently. Living out the Good News of Christ's life, death, and resurrection requires a little discomfort! In our increasingly secular culture, the church is oftentimes dismissed with scorn and resentment, even malice. Our response must be to rethink and refocus on the basics of our discipleship - the ways in which our words and our deeds reflect and witness to our faith.

Trying to get to the heart of discipleship in a short newsletter article is a tall order. But at a basic level, it's about making the changes in our lives to follow Jesus more closely. It's about learning how to practice our spirituality and how we "do church" in new ways.

What changes do you feel called to make in order to follow Jesus more faithfully? What changes does St. Paul need to make to proclaim the Good News more effectively?

Let us pray, using the words of Bishop Richard of Chichester, written in 1253:

We thank you, Lord God, for all the benefits you have given us in your Son Jesus Christ, our most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother... we pray that we may see Christ more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly...

Blessings on your week,
Pastor Christoph