

St Peter's, Ealing
Sunday 14th June 2020
Trinity 1 proper 6

Jesus calls his disciples

In my youth I spent ages dithering about what to do with my life. You see, God had been nagging me for some while about becoming a priest and I was not sure I wanted to do that, not just at that moment anyway. It was not a nag you could put your finger on. It was not always clear what the nag was about, at least at first. I went to church, did some pastoral and youth work stuff but that was never quite what God wanted of me.

I can remember clearly when I gave in. I was studying for a BEC/Tech HND in Computer Studies at what was then called Plymouth Polytechnic. I was on my way to lunch after a systems architecture lecture. As I crossed the car park I remember stopping still in my tracks. I took a deep breath and then I said, "Ok God, you want me to be a priest, you sort it."

Now be very careful what you tell God to do or what you ask of God. You might just get what you asked for. Impossibly, four months later I was on a degree course I loved. Three years after that I was studying for the priesthood at Oxford, three years after that I was being ordained at Ripon Cathedral and thirty-two years later here I am sat in front of you.

God is always at us you know. We are not always listening. We do not always want to listen. Sadly, today I cannot help but feel there are many people who actively block God out. Sometimes because we refuse to believe God is here. Sometimes because we cannot believe God wants anything to do with us. "What, me God? You must be joking!" that's how I felt for a long time. What did God want with a working-class lad like me? He must be joking.

I think that must be how the apostles felt when they were collared by Jesus. Fishermen were not highly qualified, even necessarily literate souls. They had their boats and their nets and they worked very hard. A tax collector would have felt the same. He was literate but had chosen a less than popular career in the eyes of his fellow Israelites. The others all came from various walks of life with equally low or differing expectations – James and John may have had ideas above their station but that is for another sermon. I doubt any of them

expected such a calling. Yet the power and wonder of God drew them to Jesus who showed them how God was calling them to God's service.

I wonder how you hear God. I am sure you do, that is one of the reasons I would have thought why you are here now. If God did not mean anything to you why waste such a valuable morning listening to some dusty old cleric warble on (that is me by the way, not a comment on my colleagues!).

Normally, as we gather, we would share in the bread and wine of the Holy Eucharist. As we broke and shared the bread and sipped in the common cup, the presence of Christ amongst us calls us to God's service and love. As Jesus stood on the shores of Lake Galilee or walked the streets of Nazareth and Jerusalem calling Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew and all the other disciples to follow him, he calls us as we reach out to receive him into our lives. Do we hear Jesus? Do we listen for his word for us? What are we going to do about it?