

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

No one ever became a Catholic, or a Christian for that matter, without first knowing a true Catholic, or an 'adult' Christian, someone who had truly converted. G.K. Chesterton once wrote that there was only one really strong argument against Christianity: **Christians**. Ouch. He also said that there was only one really strong argument for Christianity: **Christians** - joyful Christians, Christians that love in the dimension of the Cross, Christians that give their life for the enemy. An 'adult' Christian is always attractive,

as they cannot help but radiate Christ, the One who gives them the ability to be joyful, love, and give their life. Perhaps the most important of these Christians are called parents. There is abundant scientific research that shows that the single most effective predictor of a child's continued faith and fidelity to the Church is the presence of a father who goes to church regularly.

All of this is corroborated by the Gospel for this Sunday which shows us that the disciples did not simply come to Jesus on their own. Andrew brought his brother Peter to Jesus. John the Baptist brought many to Jesus by identifying Jesus, not himself, as 'the Lamb of God' and as the promised Messiah. The disciples became disciples after knowing an 'adult' disciple.

Jesus' last words to His followers came in His commandment to go out and preach the Good News to the whole world. Christians are called to be like John the Baptist in leading others to Christ. That is the mission of every Christian, not just priests and religious. To be any kind of Christian at all is necessarily to be a missionary. A missionary is simply one on a mission. We are all given the same mission by Christ, to preach the Gospel, using words when necessary. That means our essential mission is to become more and more like the saints. We are pointing fingers. Do we point to ourselves or to our Lord? The pointing does not have to be done in words, and often should not be, but rather through the way we live our life. Everything we say and do answers the world's question, 'What does a Christian look like?'

Jesus never forces anyone to be his disciple. I think it is interesting that John's Gospel gives us Jesus' first words: 'What are you looking for?' Let us ask ourselves, as we begin this new year, 'What am I looking for? Will I be satisfied with another year like the last? Was it just mediocre? Did I have to alienate myself to be happy?' Imagine Jesus asking us, 'What are you seeking? What are you looking for? Is it me? Is it the truth?' Imagine Jesus inviting us, 'Come and see.'

Whatever it is we discover about ourselves and what we are truly searching for and seeking after, even if it is not what we expected, know that discipleship to Jesus is where we are going to find peace. Discipleship to Jesus is where we are going to find happiness. Discipleship to Jesus is where we are going to find eternal life. Discipleship to Jesus is where we are going to find joy.

Jesus never forces anyone to be his disciple, he just invites: 'Come and see.'

Peace,