

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B, January 14, 2018

I like the story of the young woman who wanted to go to college, but her heart sank when she read the question on the application blank that asked, "Are you a leader?" Being both honest and conscientious, she wrote, "No," and returned the application, expecting the worst. To her surprise, she received this letter from the college: "Dear Applicant: A study of the application forms reveals that this year our college will have 1,452 new leaders. We are accepting you because we feel it is imperative that they have at least one follower."

We want to lead. But, in the church, it is imperative that we have followers. In fact it is imperative for all of us to be followers. Nathanael learned this. He was skeptical at first but he was transformed. He became a follower because Phillip invited him. Let me ask you: What was it that Phillip saw in Christ that moved him to follow, that stirred him so to invite his friend Nathanael. Come and see what? What did Phillip see in Jesus of Nazareth?

### Ordinary and Humble Princes

Most everybody has a soft spot in their hearts for fairy tales. There is just something about a fairy tale's reversal of expectations that intrigues us. There is something delicious about finding out that the frog is really a handsome prince that the ugly duckling is the one that grows into the most resplendent of all swans. We enjoy it when the moment of truth comes for the characters in a story as they discover that the scruffy-looking character they never quite trusted is actually the true king of the realm.

In the classic *The Wizard of Oz* we get a double treat at the end of the story: first, the great and powerful Oz turns out to be nothing but the man behind the curtain, a puller of levers and switches who looks like a humbug of a charlatan. But then, almost before the dust of that reversal of expectation settles, we get jolted yet again: as it turns out, the humble man behind the curtain is a pretty good wizard after all.

Fairy tales are stories of transformation, and that's what happened to these simple people we call the disciples.

If you took the disciples and brought them all together into one room, you would never in your wildest imagination guess by looking at them that this weak-looking pack of ordinary folks could change the world. But they did. The disciples changed the world because it was to them that the secret of the universe was first revealed. The disciples needed to be common, ordinary, and above all humble if they were going to do Jesus any good and so change the world. But as it turned out, each one of them was the frog who was really a prince! (by Scott Hoezee)

### **A Weapon of Love**

Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birthday we celebrate this week, spoke with some frequency during his years of ministry of putting on the "weapon of love." Responding to those who resisted the emerging civil rights movement, King asserted, "We will counter your force with soul force, we will match your ability to hate with our ability to love."

And King reminded us that at the heart of Jesus' life and message is the call to be peacemakers and reconcilers. Violence, said King again and again, "never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problems; it merely creates new and more complicated ones."

We live in a world thirsty for this gospel of peace. With Martin Luther King, and with Jesus before him, we need to announce with integrity, "The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everyone blind. It is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than on love. It destroys community... Violence ends by defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers." (by Joel D. Kline from *Come and See*)