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COME SPIRIT!!

2nd Ordinary Time B-2003 THEME: The God of the Upset
Applecarts

As we exit the Christmas season and begin the season of the year, the Church takes us to the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. For the next two weeks we have various accounts of the calling of his closest disciples. This week's is taken from the *Gospel of John*. Two individuals, Andrew and one other, are disciples of John the Baptist and are present when the Baptist points to Jesus and calls him the Lamb of God. I would think that there were other disciples of the Baptist present, but these two listened closely to John and then did the unthinkable for a disciple: they left their master. They left the dynamic John the Baptist, and followed a stranger. The Baptist had already called them from the selfishness of the world. Now, he was demanding that they sacrifice even their allegiance to him. In this same *Gospel of John*, the Baptist will say, "I must decrease and he, Jesus, must increase."

"What are you looking for?" Jesus asks these two new followers. "We are looking to be with you, Teacher, Rabbi. Where are you staying?" Then, after spending the day with Jesus, one of these men, Andrew, found his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus, who renamed Simon, Peter.

It is so typical of Jesus. He just knows how to upset our applecarts, change our whole lives and call us to himself.

The reading isn't just about the first days of the Public Ministry of Jesus some two thousand years ago. The reading is about every day of our lives right here, right now.

There are many times that we are comfortable in
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following Jesus. We have done our best to establish a Christian lifestyle. We go to Church. We avoid major sins. We keep an eye out for the less fortunate. We are serious about living our faith, and then, just when we are content with our lifestyle, we are called to a greater faith, a greater devotion, a more determined following of the Lord.

This is not extraordinary. It is ordinary. Many of us have lost loved ones recently. All had been going well, and then, we were shocked out of our daily faith routine and forced to take a deeper look at exactly what we believe when we say that Jesus is Lord of the Living and Dead. After the funeral, after the tears, we try to return to our faith lifestyle, but it isn't easy or even possible. The ache within remains. We find ourselves searching for a new understanding of this Jesus who makes such huge demands on our lives. It takes spiritual courage to say to this Lord of the Upset Applecart, "Where are you staying?"

We have great plans and desires for our children. But our children are unique. Their plans, their desires, their gifts may not coincide with our dreams for them. That intelligent hard working daughter, that future doctor or lawyer or CPA in our minds, takes a path that we would never consider or desire for her. We have prayed hard for this kid whom we are convinced is not reaching her potential and we end up questioning whether the Lord has been hearing our prayers. But the God of the Upset Applecart is calling us to trust Him to do the rest after we have done our best. We are forced to seek where he is staying, not where we would like him to be.

We reached out to the elderly neighbor down the street who needed someone to take him to the doctor, help with his

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shopping etc. He was always kind and generous to us and our children. It was all a good experience in Christianity not only for the children, but also for us. And then he becomes bedridden. Instead of the once a week visit, he needs us to look in on him every day, several times a day. "I have done my part," we declare to the God of the Upset Applecart. "Not yet," he responds. "If you really want to see where I am living, you'll have to go down a block and check on Grandpa."

Our own health has been a bit questionable, but we have been able to live with your limitations, accept our humanity, and continue our lives. Then the doctors shock us with a diagnosis that will radically change everything, if we survive. So, we come before the Lord and you say, "Lord, I really need your help to get through this." and we hear the response, "My help you will have, getting through this you will do, but returning to your former life is no longer my call to you." The God of the upset applecart is calling us to a new way of life, a new union with his cross.

Perhaps this is all too dramatic. Maybe, we are simply searching for God and coming up with nothing. While everyone around us is having a wonderful spiritual experience, we see no celebration in faith. Church going, the Christian lifestyle are all embraced, but the only real experience is the experience of dryness. The mystics spoke about the dark night of the soul, but we are no mystics, just ordinary individuals who are not finding the joy in faith that others seem to have. So we go before the God of the Upset Applecart and ask him to help us find the place in our lives where he dwells. We may not find

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him where we expect, but the one who says, "Come and see," guarantees that we will indeed find him.

The one consistency about Christianity is that Jesus is

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always shocking us out of our routine, continually making the ordinary extraordinary and continually calling us beyond our pre-conceptions to the place where he dwells. I am certain that all of us wonder if we have the faith we need to hold on to the Lord in the midst of turmoil. I am also certain that he will never, for any reason allow any of those who are seeking him to lose the way to the place where he dwells. He holds us in his hand. He will never let us get lost.

Today we pray to the God of the Upset Applecart, as really we do every Sunday, and every day for that matter, for the courage, the faith, to learn where he dwells.