

**The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John
Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ,
January 24, 2021**

RESPONSE NEEDED



In this Sunday's Gospel, four people were suddenly asked to do something surprising, and they agreed! What would prompt practical, hardworking fishermen to abandon their jobs and their responsibilities because someone walking by said, "Follow me."

Perhaps Simon, Andrew, James, and John responded as they did because this was not the first time they had encountered Jesus. Perhaps they had been listening to his preaching for some time. Perhaps they had been discussing his words among themselves. Perhaps they wanted to give their lives to something more than pulling fish out of the sea

In telling the story of the call of those four men, Mark may have dramatically condensed a more gradual process whereby Simon, Andrew, James, and John moved away from being fisherman to being disciples.

We experience such a gradual process in our own lives. We can certainly have a dramatic moment of conversion in which we radically change our understanding of life and our way of living. But most of the time that conversion, that growing in holiness, is a gradual process - one that has its steps backward as well as forward. As we listen to the scriptures, as we receive the sacraments, as we gather as God's Church, we come into the presence of the Lord who keeps calling us to follow him a little more.

This Sunday's Gospel shows a dramatic response when Jesus says, "Follow me." But we need to remember that the point is not how quickly or gradually Simon, Andrew, James, and John may have reacted, but rather that they did respond to the Lord's invitation. And that response is something the Lord is also asking of us.

On the journey at your service in our Lord,

Father John Carlos