

Date Preached	13-Nov-2022	Date Initiated	25-Oct-2022
Where Preached	SAK	Appointed Readings	St Andrew, All Years

" Andrew readily obeyed the call of ... Jesus ..., ↓
and brought his brother with him "



I worry, some days, how much my preaching reveals about the bizarre way my brain sometimes works. A month or two ago, I told you how all the pomp and pageantry surrounding the late Queen Elizabeth's death sent me down rabbit holes of arcane royal protocol. Then, two weeks ago, I used the old joke about the chicken crossing the road as an entrée into the story of Zacchæus.

Well, fasten your seatbelts, for, I fear, it's about to get a little 'bizarre-r.' As I pondered our readings for today ... and reflected on our patron St Andrew's epithet—in essence, his apostolic 'nickname'—the *FIRST-CALLED* ... my mind hurtled back to all the hours I spent down in the basement watching TV when I was a kid. Now, you'll have to transport yourself back to those primitive, ancient times to catch the drift of my memories. For in those olden days, we didn't select which program to wanted to watch, at our convenience. No, if we wanted to see an episode—and *only* one episode, mind you!—of *Dallas* or *Hill St Blues* or *M*A*S*H*, we had to tune in at the precise hour the network broadcast the show. And ... we also had to suffer through all the *commercials*, too. There was no fast forwarding or even a mute button. Do you remember these days?

This meant that certain TV ads became part of the current culture in a way that just doesn't happen any more. "Where's the beef?" "Tastes great! No, less filling!" "He *likes* it! Hey, Mikey!" One iconic tag line, in the early 80s, was for a new organic shampoo: "It was so good, I told two friends about it; and they told two friends; and so on, and so on, and so on." As the actress Heather Locklear¹ said this, you'll remember, the TV screen split into two images, and then into four, and then sixteen ... as word of the modern miracle of a wheat-germ-and-honey shampoo swept the nation. It's a marketing tactic so obvious that it's almost sly: Don't just *buy* a bottle of this stuff – get out there and *tell* everyone how *great* it is!

Now, far be it from me to equate St Andrew, our parish patron, with the venerable Ms Locklear (!) ... and it would be downright blasphemous to place the Good News of Jesus Christ in even remotely the same category as Fabergé Organics! ... **BUT**. Did you notice that the *first-called* Apostle is *also* the *first-to-tell*?² Andrew is introduced to Jesus by St John the Baptist; Jesus tells him to "come and see" what Jesus is all about; and Andrew spends the whole afternoon listening to Him teach. Now, when Jesus calls the *other* Apostles, they put down their fishing nets or leave their tax booth and set off with Him, but Andrew's response is unique among the Twelve. When *he* decides to follow Jesus ... he goes home to find his brother Simon (Peter) and tell him, "We've found the Messiah!" Andrew not only responds to Jesus' call, but also *shares* what has called him ... with others. >> Andrew tells Peter; Andrew and Peter tell two friends; and they tell two friends; and so on, and so on, and so on. And very soon, by God's grace, the Church is born.

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¹ I'll confess I didn't remember she was the spokesmodel, but mighty YouTube reminded me.

² In fairness, St John the Baptist is actually the first person to tell others about Jesus; but he isn't an Apostle.

Andrew's 'dual firsts'—first to be called *and* first to tell—are a powerful message of the full charge of our Christian faith. We are, of course, called to *listen*: to seek, to study, to learn, to praise and, above all, to pray (even more with our ears than with our lips). And we are *also* called to *share*: to tell others Who Jesus is; what—and why—we believe; why we go to church and what happens here, week after week; how our faith has formed and shaped our lives; how Jesus really does yearn "to draw all the world to Himself."³ Moses tells the Israelites, "The word [of God] is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart." But others need to be *taught* the incredible, yet invisible, nearness of God. And so, St Paul writes, as Christians, we have a mission ... a *duty* ... to tell the world all about this blessed nearness of Jesus Christ. God will save *everyone* who confesses faith in Him. But no one can confess what they don't believe ... or believe what they haven't heard about ... or hear about what they haven't been told ... or be told if no one *tells* them. So, go tell them!

What holds for Andrew ... and for shampoo ... holds for the gift of Christian faith, as well: First, we must give it a try. Andrew sits at Jesus' feet and learns. A teenager buys a bottle of pretty smelling goo and lathers it into his hair. We come to this place to worship; to learn; to befriend; to serve; to care; to be family—to love and to be loved. †† And then, after we've tried it and been converted, we must *share* our faith with others. Andrew runs to fetch Peter, to say the Messiah is *here!* The teenager tells two friends how good this new gunk is, and before you know it, the whole *school's* using it!

And how about us? ¶¶When we stop at the IGA on the way home from St Andrew's, we take time to tell the produce-stocker or clerk how thankful we are for all her hard work. ¶¶We talk with a son or daughter ... or niece or nephew ... who's worried about having a baby or raising a child in this world; and we share what a wonderful blessing the Church is for families. ¶¶We call a friend we haven't seen in a while and learn she's struggling with a lot of bad news; and we invite her to come to a service ... or a class ... or a concert ... or a bazaar ... with us. ¶¶On Thanksgiving, Uncle Walter, the blowhard, crows that he doesn't need anything in this life that he can't be or do all by himself; and later, in a quiet moment, we tell him we can't *imagine* our life without Jesus at its center: how empty ... unfulfilled ... hopeless ... it would feel. And we glimpse the tiniest flicker of curiosity in our uncle's eyes.

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In Christ-the-Messiah, God has given us gifts beyond value ... grace without limit. And in St Andrew, God has given us the very pattern of faith in that Christ: listen, then *tell*. So, on this St Andrew's Day, I ask you: >> Will you tell two friends about Jesus ... so they can tell two friends ... and so on, and so on, and so on?



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³ Eucharistic Prayer 2 (in *Enriching Our Worship 1*).