Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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“He summoned those whom he wanted and they came to him” (Mark 3:13).

*1 Sm 24:3-21; Mark 3:13-19*

The wisdom of any leader is revealed in the people he or she chooses as associates and advisors. Presidents unveil their agendas in the members of their cabinet. A pope suggests the path of his papacy by his choice for secretary of state and the other members of the Curia. So, Jesus’ selection of the Twelve Apostles reveals a great deal about his understanding of his mission. All four Gospels list names Jesus called, and the setting on a mountain after a night of prayer gives special weight to

the moment.

If credentials and experience were important, Jesus' choice of four fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot and a traitor raises questions about why he chose these men and not others. Deeper introductions reveal Peter, boastful but indecisive, short-tempered brothers, James and John, Thomas the skeptic, Simon, linked to underground zealots determined to overthrow Rome, and the tragic Judas.

Why would Jesus choose such an ill-suited, mismatched group of nobodies to save the world if not to demonstrate the power of God to redeem and fashion a community of grace and purpose from ordinary humanity?  In the course of their time together, Jesus, a village carpenter, would take raw and unhewn lumber and build a house worthy of God on earth. Truth be told, it was their failures and weaknesses that proved the power of God's mercy to transform sinners into saints. Even betrayal, denial and abandonment only made the light of God's unconditional love shine all the brighter.

Lost under layers of theological and historical mythmaking, these glimpses of real lives are buried like foundation stones to support the church that emerged from the first generations of believers. Lost with them are the many anonymous women and men who lived the Paschal Mystery by dying and rising with Jesus to begin the transformation of a sinful world into the Beloved Community that is the end of history.

We are today's Apostles, Jesus' messengers of hope, ambassadors of reconciliation and models of ordinary holiness, plying our simple gifts and best intentions to the needs of our communities. The Word of God calls us by name each morning to be with Jesus in the work of daily redempton, mending the world a stitch at a time, *poco a poco, pas a pas*, little by little, step by step. With grace to multiply our efforts, it is enough to do the best we can as things arise.

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