

Homily: John 1: 29-42

John's witness about Jesus Christ is one of the greatest witnesses ever given by man. John was unmistakable in his proclamation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today's scripture bestows a number of titles on Jesus, developing a strong Christology. John the Baptist calls Jesus "the Lamb of God", "a man who was before me", "the one on whom the Holy Spirit remained", and "the Son of God". John's disciples call Jesus "Rabbi". Andrew calls him the "Messiah". Verses 43-51 continue to bestow titles. Nathanael calls Jesus Rabbi, Son of God, and King of Israel. Jesus completes the Christology with his own declaration that he is the Son of Man.

The witness of John the Baptist is crucial to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. John's witness begins with the reference to the testimony given by John to priests and Levites who had been sent from Jerusalem to ask, "Who are you?" (1:19). John makes it clear to them that he was not the Messiah, but was sent to "Make straight the way of the Lord" (1:20-23). Then, speaking of the one on whom the Spirit descended, John said, "And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God" (1:34).

Jesus Christ, Lamb of God:

Down through the centuries "*the Lamb of God*" has been one of the most cherished symbols of Jesus Christ held by believers.

1. The Lamb is a picture of Christ our Passover who was sacrificed for us. Symbolically the Passover pictured the coming of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. The Lamb without defect pictured His sinless life (Jn. 1:29; Ex.12: 5) and the blood sprinkled on the doorposts pictured His blood was a sign that the life and blood of the innocent Lamb had been substituted for the firstborn.
2. Raymond Brown suggests that John the Baptist hailed Jesus as the lamb of Jewish apocalyptic expectation who was to be raised up by God to destroy evil in the world<sup>1</sup>. This picture fits John's prediction that Jesus would divide the wheat from the chaff and we see that in (Mt 4:23; Lk.3: 17) and similarly in (Revelation 17:14).

Given this backdrop, John the evangelist would seem to be a superlative screenplay writer. He is the master of crafting brief scenes that include whole

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Anchor Bible Commentary on John*, p. 59. He was an American theologian and a highly regarded Roman Catholic biblical scholar. His rigorous examination of the Gospels resulted in the publication of such works as the two-volume *The Gospel According to John* (1966, 1970), *The Birth of the Messiah* (1977), and *The Death of the Messiah* (1994) as well as more than 35 other books.

Christologies! Here, in this scene in which John the Baptist introduces us to Jesus as the Lamb of God, John the evangelist manages to convey that this Lamb of God is pre-existent, the one upon whom the Spirit descends and rests, and the chosen one. John the Baptist's position is unique and fearless in introducing Jesus to two of his disciples Andrew and Simon. Today, we unfortunately term this situation as "*high risk ministry*".

Andrew's desperate effort to seek Christ:

One of the two disciples is Andrew and this is a most graphic picture as it shows the great eagerness of Jesus to reach men and women.

- Jesus 'turned around' to face them. This was a clear demonstration of His open arms and willingness for them to join Him.
- He knew their hearts had been just stirred to follow Him
- He immediately snaps around to face them to help.

Jesus asks this basic question of life: "What do you want? ". He does not ask by saying "Whom do you want? Or rather to say what are you after? This could mean a range of queries, such as meaning, purpose and significance in life or even a religion of self-improvement and human development. So instead of answering, they counter Jesus' question with another question: "Where are you staying?"

My interpretation is that they were not asking for a simple conversation by the side of the road. They were asking to join Him in the quiet of His home, to open and pour out their hearts to Him and for Him to become their teacher. They want Jesus to meet the crying need of their hearts and they are extended a warm invitation: "Come and you will see". This exchange with Jesus changed their lives forever. Andrew's first concern was his brother Peter. As soon as he could after discovering Jesus for himself, Andrew rushed to find his own brother, Simon. He could not contain the peace and joy; he just had to tell his loved ones immediately. He wanted them also to experience the love and joy and peace of Jesus.

Many years ago, God pointed me to this very situation. He was asking me if I had planned for this eternal and heavenly journey by myself or rather going to bring along my entire household and friends. I am still working on it and happy to share that it is growing in numbers year after year. And I would like to see that happening in our community at Grace Church as well.

Andrew was a great witness, a great personal worker for the Lord. He was always seen bringing someone to Jesus and John the evangelist mentions in Chapter 6 and 12. I am always shaken by Andrew's conviction, "We have found the Messiah". Jesus sees the potential within a man and longs to change that man to make him everything he can become. He looks at Simon and says, "You will be called Cephas, meaning Peter. This was a prediction that he would be converted and changed from a self-centered, defensive, overbearing, and carnal man into a strong, solid, immovable and unbreakable rock for God. So who is this mysterious unnamed disciple with Andrew? Is he John the evangelist? Apparently it is true as he remembers the hour some fifty years later (18:15; 20:3). Because of Christ, Amen