In the Gospel lesson that we just read, Jesus encountered two of John’s disciples who have been curiously tracking him since the day of his baptism. These disciples had witnessed the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and heard the heavenly voice declaring Him as God’s beloved Son. Many of them were intrigued and amazed by what they saw. However, they wanted to see more tangible proof and evidence before they were fully convinced. They wanted to have a face-to-face encounter with Jesus and hear from him first-hand whether he indeed was the long-prophesied Messiah. Chances are, if we were one of them, we would have probably done the same thing as well.

Perhaps feeling annoyed by the curious disciples’ pursuit, Jesus suddenly turned and asked them “***What are you looking for?***” Then they replied to Jesus, “Where are you staying, Rabbi?” They wanted to spend some quality time with Jesus so they may ask him more questions about who he really was? **They wanted not only to know about Jesus, but they wanted to know him more personally as well**. Jesus then invited the two disciples to ***“Come and See”***. By these two simple words, Jesus opened doors for these would-be disciples for a **deeper relationship and a personal invitation and commitment to follow. “Come and See!”**

Furthermore, these disciples’ commitment to follow ultimately gave them greater courage and faith to lead others to Christ as well. The moment Andrew came to fully realize who Jesus was, immediately he went to look for his own brother Simon. Well, that seems natural that when you find something new and exciting, you want to tell others about it and not just keeping it to yourself. Later on, Andrew went to find his friend and Philip found Nathanael, although Nathanael did express doubt saying “can anything good can come out of Nazareth?” But Philip was not discouraged by those nay-sayers and doubters, he responded by extending the same invitation that Jesus used - “**Come and See**”.

So ***what were the disciples looking for in Jesus, anyway****?* Did they want more signs and miracles in order for them to be convinced and believe or was there more? What about us? **What are WE looking for, when we declare our faith and come to follow Christ? What are WE looking for whenever we came before God in worship and in prayer?**

This is a matter of spiritual discipline. To different people, that could mean different things. Somemay be looking for a deeper sense of spiritual grounding or belonging. Some of us may still be searching ourselves. Some of us may be lost right now and not sure of where we stand spiritually. Some of us may have this deep hunger and burning desire of knowing more…and that’s good. Some of us, however, may have our journey of faith stalled and reached a spiritual plateau or perhaps in need of a spiritual revival and a rekindling of our relationship with God. But as I mentioned last week, when we declare our faith and commitment in Christ, through our baptism, it is just the beginning of a life-long journey. **We’re in for the long-haul, as we’re set to run this spiritual marathon, and definitely not a sprint.**

When Jesus called upon those two followers to *“****Come and See****”,* He was calling them (and us today) for a **lifelong commitment to follow and to see for ourselves who He really is. He’s not interested in any short-term head knowledge, but he wants us to yearn for the long-term heart knowledge instead.** It certainly does not come overnight. It takes a great deal of personal discipline, as well as lots of prayers.

Like the early disciples, it’s OK if we have more questions than answers, because we would never fully understand God’s will in our lifetime. It is a constant work-in-progress. It has its ups and downs. But we trust that God will unfold our spiritual understanding each day. The deeper the relationship we get, the greater level of discipline is required. God has assured us that the Holy Spirit will reveal God’s greater plan for us, through God’s will and timing and not ours. We may have doubts like Nathanael and others, but God will continue to extend the invitation for us to “Come and See” for ourselves and to experience God fully.

In the same way, Christ assured us that we are never alone throughout this whole process. The disciples shoulder one another’s burden by encouraging and motivating one another. They became close friends, as they spent more time with one another, praying for one another. They held each other accountable and fine-tune one another’s faith, as Proverbs 27:17 tells us **"*as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another*."**

Furthermore, during the course of our life-long journey, there will be times when we will be asked to take a leap of faith by stepping out of our comfort zone. Just as the Magi did when they were led to “come and see” this Christ-child event on the very first Epiphany. They came by faith in risking their own lives, but they returned filled with great joy and high hope. They had exciting stories to share with others, telling them what they saw and what this Messiah child would do for ALL of humanity. They extended the invitation to others to “come and see” alongside with others, based on their personal witnesses.

The Magi did NOT go back the same way as they came because their lives have been changed by what they experienced in Christ. In the same way, OUR journey ahead will NEVER be the same either when we came to faith in Christ. There will be times of uncertainties, unknowns, and doubts over the course of our spiritual journey, but rest assure that the Spirit of Discernment will lead us, direct us, and protect us along the way. As Paul reminded the early disciples in Corinth that, ***God is faithful, and he will not let us be tested beyond our strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that we may be able to endure it.[[1]](#footnote-1)***

**Through our coming and seeking of the incarnated Christ, we have been called to be agents of transformation and hope for others as the** “**Salt and Light**” of the world.[[2]](#footnote-2) **The life of Christ shall be made evident through our conduct, our character, by the life we live, and the legacy that we pave for our future.**

Furthermore, Christ has reminded us that we are all gifted individuals with capacities to serve and to love…not only among ourselves, but among those who may have insulted us or hurt us. Christ has called us to exercise our energy and our gifts of intelligence, imagination, and love for one another. Through our **spiritual humility**, as John did when he willingly steps aside to make way for Christ to be glorified. *God commanded us to humble ourselves and place ourselves less, for the sake of the greater good of the body in which we are called. The less of us, the more of Christ and Christ’s body.*

In honor of the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. this weekend, I leave with you the resounding words of Dr. King’s definition of what true Greatness is. We recognize our roles in society through our personal discipline and service to others. We demonstrate mutual affection towards others within our Beloved community by inviting others to “Come and See” what Christ’s love is all about.

From his famous ***“The Drum Major Instinct”*** sermon that he gave two months before his assassination in 1968, King spoke of what it means to be “great” in being a servant to others. ***“If you want to be important - wonderful. If you want to be recognized - wonderful. If you want to be great - wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That’s a new definition of greatness.”[[3]](#footnote-3)***

When we extend Christ’s invitation of “Come and See” towards others, through our humble and servile attitude, we come to see the world through a different spiritual lens and a whole new perspective. We come to seek the common good of the community first rather than our own pursuit of self-interest and personal benefits. Instead of leading from the front line, we are called to take a lesser role by following the examples and the teachings of Christ…as we lead from behind. Our greatness is illustrated by the placement of our priority through our LOVE…Our LOVE for God first, then our LOVE for others, and finally, the LOVE for ourselves.

**Through Christ’s moment of Epiphany, God came among us and enabled us to see God’s greater plan of salvation for humankind. God came and we saw!** In what ways, do we see ourselves as the front-runners (or as the trail-blazers) for Christ, by showing others what Christ is all about, by extending Christ’s invitation to “Come and See”? Keep in mind that this is not about what WE can do, but what Christ enables us to do through and by the grace of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit. As the Apostle Paul reminded us, ***“For it is by grace we have been saved, through faith-- and this not from ourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one may boast.[[4]](#footnote-4)***

**Let us, therefore, Come and See, Go and Tell. Serve the Lord and Serve Others!** All this we do through the power of the One who sends us as witnesses to the world. In the name of our God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *1 Corinthians 10:13*  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Matthew 5:13-16* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *“The Drum Major Instinct”* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Ephesians 2:8-9* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)