

'IMAGINE, PRAY AND COMMIT TO LOVE' - HOMILY – 22 JANUARY 2017

WEDDING REHEARSAL

At the **wedding rehearsal** in the church, **the couple imagine the scene first**,
And then choose where they will stand and where the bridal party will be.
Where the readers will sit, where the flowers are placed, where the music will be played.
Many options.
Already months before hand, they have imagined in the church some of these.
At the rehearsal, they face each other. And look into each other's eyes.
Putting each other first as they practice the ritual.
They will have photos and maybe videos of the ceremony to remember,
But in the stillness of this part of the ceremony, **they gaze in wonder at each other and speak** their vows to each other.
Experiencing the call of each other into this commitment of love.

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION

Baptismal Preparation is also held in the church.
That way, the **couple can imagine** what it will be like on the day.
Options are explained, and they visualise where people will be.
Having imagined, they decide.
They will inform the Godparents of their role, how they can involve their parents and siblings.
The baptismal candle to prepare, knowing they will light it on their child's birthday and baptismal anniversary every year. They take time to prepare.
Experiencing the call as parents to enter their children into this commitment of love.

SCHOOL CLASS MASSES PREPARATION AND PRACTICE

For School Class Masses, the children come with their teachers and practice in the church.
Already beforehand, teachers in the classroom have explained about the Mass, and the **children have imagined**,
Now, in the church, they rehearse their actions and hymns and processions and readings and drama.
And they found moments of silence and moments of excitement.
Dimensions of prayer.
Experiencing the call by God to celebrate life as a commitment to love God and our neighbour.

And whether it is a wedding or baptism or school class Mass, the **WORD OF GOD** will be read and proclaimed.
As the Bible Readings are chosen for the wedding by the couple.
Or by one of the couples for group baptisms,
Or the readings of the day for school class Mass,
Each reading is prepared with imagination.
Not only for the special day, but also spending time with the reading, **imagining, praying.**
Experiencing the Bible Passage as Word of God, bringing us alive.
Experiencing it as God, in love with us, touches our lives.
Experiencing our love for God through the depth of the prayer experience.

In today's Gospel passage from Matthew 4:12-23, let us take just one part and imagine.

Where do we begin?

We begin in Jesus.

Read today's passage about Jesus on the shore at the Sea of Galilee.

Read it slowly. God gave us the gift of imagination.

IMAGINE JESUS WALKING BY THE SEA

Picture the scene in your mind.

Perhaps early in the morning after people have been fishing at sea.

Jesus is already known in the area.

He is living by the Sea of Galilee.

He has been proclaiming the 'Good News'.

He surprises Peter and Andrew.

They were putting out a fishing net.

They hear Jesus inviting them to follow him.

As they begin to follow. Jesus sees James and John.

Have they been working during the night? Are they tired?

We hear in this passage that they are mending their nets.

They are at work.

Jesus called them. Hear the tone of his voice.

Think what Peter and Andrew might have thought.

Think about what James and John might say to their father.

So many questions and things to consider.

What must they have seen and heard from Jesus that would lead them to follow?

Picture the face once more of Jesus looking at each of them individually.

They follow.

Let us pause once more.

LET US IMAGINE OURSELVES AS WE MEET JESUS

Let us imagine ourselves at the beach, or perhaps the shoreline of a lake or lagoon.

Imagine.

Is it noisy or quiet? Is it hot? Is it calm or with a breeze?

Are you standing or lying down or sitting, or swimming?

Are you walking along the shore?

Is the sun beating down on you or is it overcast?

Can you hear waves or ripples?

Are you relaxed? Are you thinking about something?

What are you wearing?

How do your feet feel?

Are your arms light or heavy?

Rest for a moment where you are.

Look as you see Jesus walking along the shore.

He is at one with the scene around him. Calm, serene.

Yet also with a sense of purpose.

He sees you. He comes up to you. And speaks.

How does he sound?

How is his face, his posture?

Describe slowly the way he gently looks at you.

It touches something in you, something you are looking for in life.

His words surprise you.

He invites you to follow him.

DEEP DOWN, YOU KNOW HIM.

HE CALLS YOU.

WE PAUSE...AND WE REMEMBER

We pause again. And after a while, we remember.

We remember the beach scene with Peter, Andrew, James and John.

The sea and the beach are their work place too.

IMAGINE JESUS IN YOUR BUSY WORKPLACE

Now imagine Jesus in your work place.

Is it outside on the streets, or in the fields, driving, building or lifting?

Is it inside a factory, or an office, or classroom or someone's place or your home?

Are you listening or directing?

Are you on a computer?

And like Peter and Andrew, James and John,

Jesus comes up to you while you are busy.

And he invites you to follow him.

Think of your reaction, of your questions.

Perhaps at this very moment, Jesus gives you the very calm you need.

DEEP DOWN, YOU KNOW HIM.

HE CALLS YOU.

Now go back to the **Gospel passage and imagine you are one of the workers there.**

Think and pray like one of them.

How you respond is part of your prayer.

Be still and gently hand over to Jesus.

Be with Jesus.

DEEP DOWN, GOD KNOWS YOU.

GAZE IN WONDER AT JESUS

Experiencing the call of each other into love.

Let God take the initiative.

PAUSE.

Amen.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Imagine, Pray and Commit to Love – 22 January 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/012217.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook22012017>]