

January 14, 2008
Monday of the First Week of Ordinary Time

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

1 Samuel 1:1-8

Psalm 116:12-13, 14-17, 18-19

Mark 1:14-20

"Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."

I have been listening to an interview with Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, an international organization that creates communities where people with developmental disabilities and those who assist them share life together. In the interview he spoke about his sense of Jesus. He said that we tend to view Jesus as strong, powerful, courageous which is his picture of John the Baptist. Jean Vanier said that to him Jesus is a quiet man who simply loved people and responded to their needs. As I reflect on that interview and on the gospel reflection I wrote a day or two ago about Jesus' vulnerability, I hear today's invitation from Jesus to follow him in a whole new way. Not that any other way I heard it was incorrect, but that now is my time to encounter the quiet man who loved people and responded to their needs in ways that made him vulnerable to ridicule, rejection, and physical harm. We live in a culture that tells us we must be productive and successful. It holds up a life as successful when achievements are reached--the greater the achievement the more accomplished and successful the life. Jean Vanier, a very learned and accomplished man according to the world's standards, spends his life simply being with the mentally disabled and helping them live a life that brings them a sense of happiness and lets them feel a sense of value and worth. This is the life Henri Nouwen entered the last decade or so of his life. In fact, this was the life that finally gave Nouwen a sense of being home which he longed for all his life. Jesus was holy not because of what he did, but because he valued the life God gave him and valued the life God gave others as well. Jesus was holy just because he was child of God. I think I want to spend more time with this Jesus. I think the invitation being offered to me at this time in my life is to learn to follow this Jesus.

*"Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy."
Rabbi Abraham Heschel.*

Who is the Jesus you are called to follow now?