

# A Reflection from Deacon Steve for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Parishioners,

I suppose that it might be providential that the gospel passages for the Sunday Mass for this week and last week come during the month of January. For a great many of us, we greet January not only as a new year, but as a new beginning for us in many ways. We resolve to lose weight, drink less, learn a foreign language, take up a musical instrument, pray more, or in some other fashion find a way to move forward in a positive direction in our lives. A week ago, we heard the call of Saints Andrew and Simon Peter from the gospel of John. Now, as if we were daydreaming when that was proclaimed, our attention is again directed—this time by St. Mark—to the calling of Andrew and Simon Peter (as well as James and John) to follow Jesus. It is sort of like God telling us that *“in case you didn't hear me last week, let me call to you once again! Come, follow me.”* While our many resolutions are sincerely made, they often quickly lose their energy until they settle in as a long-lost good intention. As the saying goes, *“The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.”* I trust that none of us wish to travel that road.

God is constantly calling us to conversion. We hear it with our ears when the words of Scripture are proclaimed at Mass, and we can hear it with our hearts in times of prayer, reflection, and contemplation. What is our response to God's call? On Ash Wednesday (February 14) we will hear the call of God through the prophet Joel when he says, *“Rend your hearts, not your garments.”* That can be interpreted as God's way of urging us to experience a profound conversion, one that seeks fulfillment and peace in the things of faith instead of in the temporal things of the world.

The best resolution that we could make in this new year, 2024, is to do what we can to grow closer to God. We do that by loving God and loving our neighbor. Our bulletin each week is like a table of contents of the many ways we can accomplish the two goals of loving God and loving our neighbor. We have numerous prayer opportunities in addition to Sunday Mass. We can make casseroles for the hungry, support our Food Pantry, attend weekday Mass, give financial support to our parish and special collections, and participate in the [Nine Days Novena for Life](#).

Jesus is calling us to follow him just as he called Andrew, Simon Peter, James, and John. How will we respond to his call to each one of us?

***Deacon Steve Roscher***