

ADVENT MIDWEEK 1 Saints of Advent (St. Andrew the Apostle)
November 30, 2011
Text: John 1:35-42a
Theme: Saints of Advent: Andrew

During this season of running around and making sure everything is just right, we see Andrew completely drop his life for Jesus. Confident that the savior would lead him to better things than he could imagine, he even went and gathered up his brother. Understand. There were no guarantees here. There was not even a sure place to sleep. There was no history to track because he was the first disciple called. So Andrew was out on a limb all by himself operating on 100% faith. The church historians say that he was martyred by being crucified on an X-shaped cross. Apparently, this was his request because he did not deem himself worthy to be crucified on a cross like Jesus'. That X-shaped cross is, to this day, called a St. Andrew's Cross.

My brother-in-law was here for Thanksgiving and one of the things I have always admired about him is his understanding of success. He has seen many successes and many failures in his life and he takes them all in stride and tries to enjoy thoroughly whatever he is doing right now. So many people struggle with the concept of "making it" in the world. How do you know when you have "made it?" For most people, they are never rich enough no matter how much they have. They are never famous enough no

matter how well they are known. At what point do we just stop all the climbing, clamoring and gathering and say – from now on I just live for Jesus?

And if that day comes, what are you willing to let go of? What worldly things or ideals are you willing to release to allow you to have both hands to grab onto Jesus? That day came for Andrew as he was standing with his teacher John the Baptist. John said “Behold, the Lamb of God,” and Andrew just followed him. His only question was where are you staying so that he could find him to hear him teach. And that was it. Andrew got his brother Peter and they left everything behind to follow Jesus. They just walked away from their lives, their trades and followed Jesus around the countryside for almost four years after which he was killed by the Romans, rose from the dead and they found themselves the first pastors of the Church, a vocation for which they had not prepared and never intended to pursue. And then, they were martyred for their faith.

Each week at the Divine Service we sing the words of John the Baptist,

“Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.” As we sing John’s words, we like Andrew have the opportunity each week to drop everything and follow Jesus. As we

come to the altar and kneel down to receive the body and blood of the Lamb of God, we seek the strength to realize that nothing in and of the world is a real goal of ours: not wealth, not fame, not anything. It is all as transitory as the grass which is here one month and dead the next.

We are not mortals anymore. When we were Baptized you and I were made immortal and none of that mortal fare will satisfy us anymore. All that will truly satisfy us is following Jesus; witnessing what we see and hear; and glorifying God. This is how we achieve peace, harmony and fulfillment because this is what we were redeemed for. Have you ever tried to put a winter coat on a little child who is holding toys? When my great-nephew, Ryan was here over Thanksgiving, he had two Thomas the train engines that he carried with him 24/7. It took an act of God to make him let go of them even long enough to put a coat on. That's how we are too. Lay down all your worldly toys and ambitions. Slip Jesus on and come to know true joy as you begin to discover and live out the real vocation of your life.