



DAY 34: Meditation

THE CALLING OF THE APOSTLES

Yesterday you meditated on the temptations of Christ in the desert, and we're going to move directly to the next exercise, which is a meditation on Christ's calling to the Apostles. **It is found in #275 of the Spiritual Exercises**, and the scripture passage proper to this meditation is John chapter 1 verses 35-51.

1. Act of the Presence of God

2. Preparatory Prayer, as in #46

Lord, I ask that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of Your Divine Majesty. Amen.

3. Prelude 1: Composition of Place

Envision the sea of Galilee, from North to South it is nine miles long, and five miles across, and its water is fresh. It was famous for the abundance of the fish there, and also noted for its sudden and violent storms. We can see also the city of Bethsaida on its western shore, the area where the Apostles were from. Think about them as they lived, the way they would have spent their days up until the fateful day they met Jesus- working, or at home with their families- Peter and Andrew, James and John spending their days on that lake fishing, carrying their catch to market.

4. Prelude 2: Petition

our petition will be the one proper to the second week, in which we ask "for an **intimate knowledge of Christ**, who has become man for me, that I may love Him more and follow Him more closely."

5. Main Points for Meditation

First point: St. Peter and St. Andrew seem to have been called three times. First, to some knowledge of our Lord. This is evident from the first chapter of St John. Secondly, to a following of Christ in some way, but with the intention of returning to the possessions they had left. St. Luke tells us this in the fifth chapter. Thirdly, to follow Christ our Lord forever, St. Matthew, chapter four, and St. Mark, chapter one.

Second point: He called Philip, as we read in the first chapter of St. John. He called Matthew, as is recorded by St. Matthew himself in the ninth chapter.

Third point: He called the other Apostles, of whom no special call is mentioned in the Gospel.

Ignatius actually adds three more points now, to encourage us to look not just at the history, but at the personalities and characteristic of the Apostles themselves. He says:



1. That the Apostles were uneducated and from a humble condition of life.
2. The dignity to which they were so gently called.
3. The gifts and graces by which they were raised above all the Fathers of the Old and New Testaments.

6. Developing the Main Points

John's Gospel opens with Andrew and another disciple—likely John the Evangelist himself—standing with the Baptist. When Jesus passes, John identifies Him as the "Lamb of God." To these men, the messianic symbol was clear; the Baptist, acting as the "friend of the bridegroom," was leading the future Church to her Groom. As he placed their hands in Christ's, his own mission began to decrease so that Christ's might increase.

The two disciples followed Jesus timidly until He turned to ask, "What are you looking for?" Though He knew their hearts, He invited them to clarify their own desires. They stayed with Him from four in the afternoon into the evening, feasting on His words. This encounter remained so crystallized in John's memory that he recorded the exact hour decades later. Convinced, Andrew immediately sought his brother Peter, just as John likely sought James, to share the discovery of the Savior.

The next day, Jesus called Philip and Nathanael. Christ finds Philip not by chance, but by a grace-driven timing, speaking the definitive words of vocation: "Follow me." The sheer force of the Word Incarnate moved Philip's heart to instant obedience. Philip then found Nathanael under a fig tree, appealing to him as a devout Jew by citing Moses and the prophets.

Nathanael was initially skeptical, questioning if anything good could come from the "backwoods" of Nazareth. Rather than arguing, Philip offered a simple, trusting invitation: "Come and see." He knew a personal encounter would silence all doubt.

The Heart Without Guile

When they met, Jesus called Nathanael a "true Israelite in whom there is no guile." This was a profound theological contrast to the patriarch Jacob (Israel), who had used guile to take his brother's blessing. Jesus' mention of the fig tree carries deep weight; Saint Augustine suggests the fig leaf symbolizes the weight of sin inherited from Adam.

Jesus saw Nathanael's sin, but also his transparency. He was "curable" because he did not hide his heart; he was a sinner who confessed his need. Astonished by this supernatural knowledge of his interior life, Nathanael confessed his faith.

The Apostles responded with immediate docility, whether called directly by name or through the witness of a friend. They were not necessarily wise or powerful, but they were willing to step out of their "boats" for the true God.

In our own lives, God whispers through a thousand movements of providence, urging us to leave sin and lukewarmness behind. If we remain docile, we find Him in our hearts and the Tabernacle. We must not cut these moments short; by staying with Him in prayer, we penetrate the depths of His love and recognize Him as our only true Master.

Let's finish now with a quote from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's book "The Little Prince," where the fox teaches the little prince what it means "to tame" someone.

"What does that mean--'tame'?" [Asked the Little Prince.]

"You do not live here," said the fox. "What is it that you are looking for?"

"I am looking for men," said the little prince. "What does that mean--'tame'?"

"Men," said the fox. "They have guns, and they hunt. It is very disturbing. They also raise chickens. These are their only interests. Are you looking for chickens?"

"No," said the little prince. "I am looking for friends. What does that mean--'tame'?"

"It is an act too often neglected," said the fox. It means to establish ties."

"To establish ties'?"

"Just that," said the fox. "To me, you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you, on your part, have no need of me. To you, I am nothing more than a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world . . ."...

The fox gazed at the little prince, for a long time.

"Please--tame me!" he said.

"I want to, very much," the little prince replied. "But I have not much time. I have friends to discover, and a great many things to understand."

"One only understands the things that one tames," said the fox. "Men have no more time to understand anything. They buy things all ready made at the shops. But there is no shop anywhere where one can buy friendship, and so men have no friends any more. If you want a friend, tame me . . ."

"What must I do, to tame you?" asked the little prince.

"You must be very patient," replied the fox. "First you will sit down at a little distance from me--like that--

in the grass. I shall look at you out of the corner of my eye, and you will say nothing. Words are the source of misunderstandings. But you will sit a little closer to me, every day . . ."

The next day the little prince came back.

"It would have been better to come back at the same hour," said the fox. "If, for example, you come at four o'clock in the afternoon, then at three o'clock I shall begin to be happy. I shall feel



happier and happier as the hour advances. At four o'clock, I shall already be worrying and jumping about. I shall show you how happy I am! But if you come at just any time, I shall never know at what hour my heart is to be ready to greet you . . . One must observe the proper rites . . ."

7. Colloquy

Let's use that very important one from the second week, the one that is given in the meditation on the two standards, in #147. This one is addressed first Our Lady, "asking her to obtain for me from her Son and Lord the grace to be received under His standard, first in the highest spiritual poverty, and should the Divine Majesty be pleased thereby, and deign to choose and accept me, even in actual poverty; secondly, in bearing insults and wrongs, thereby to imitate Him better ,provided only I can suffer these without sin on the part of another, and without offense of the Divine Majesty. Then we finish with a **Hail Mary**. Then we ask Jesus her son to obtain these same favors, praying the **Soul of Christ** prayer. Finally, we speak with God the Father, asking for these graces a third time, and we finish with an **Our Father**.