

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*Fr. Paul Scalia grasps Christian truths very well, and presents them clearly so that they can be incorporated into the soul to follow Jesus.*

*Any good preacher that one hears first is preaching to himself. I need what Fr. Scalia says as much now as I did on August 5, 1951 when I was baptized.*

*On that day I knew nothing, owned nothing, and was attached only to the loving gaze and care of my family.*

*Still I received grace so that I would learn much, possess much in the SPIRITUAL world not the MATERIAL world, and become attached to the loving gaze of Jesus.*

*As years wear on, my soul nourished by Jesus yet at the same time battered by experiences and demands of the world, needs the TOTAL RECALL back to the original call for the course of the rest of my life: a journey through this world holding the hand of the Savior toward eternal life.*

*Fr. Scalia's quotes below help me to do that.*

- *Jesus' calling set the course for the rest of their lives.*
- *Members of the Church have been "called" – out of sin, out of the world, into communion with God.*
- *[Jesus is the] focus of their attention and the standard for their lives. He doesn't call them to an idea or plan. He doesn't direct their attention to a protocol or policy. He directs them to Himself. [So I must meet him in prayer, sacrament, scripture, charity.—rp]*
- *Christian discipleship is not learned from a book. It's learned from Him. Even the Scriptures, the written Word of God, exist only to bring us into deeper knowledge of Him, the Incarnate Word.*
- *Every work of the Church – her teachings, sacraments, and governance – is ultimately intended for this purpose, to make her members better followers of Christ. To view the Church as having any other purpose (social justice, political advocacy, environmental activism, etc.) is to misunderstand and misrepresent her.*

- *to follow Christ means to be a member of the Church.*
- *Second, discipleship requires change. ... that Jesus is worth following. Because of their trust in Him, they are willing to be changed by Him.*
- *Third, natural virtues. ... He incorporates what they already know and can already do into His divine call. Discipleship means surrendering our natural virtues to Christ, and for Christ. His grace doesn't destroy but perfects nature.*
- *Discipleship requires that ability to risk something, to make an effort that might not pan out. To cast the net without knowing what will happen.*
- *Fourth, ... Discipleship is not always activity and adventure. At times we have to prepare and organize and arrange things.*
- *Finally, discipleship requires detachment. Peter and Andrew followed "at once," James and John "immediately." ... They left to follow Him. ... from possessions and pleasures, family and friends, and even our own will ... There's something holding us right now. To follow Him, we must abandon it.*
- ***We need to be recalled, renewed in our discipleship. Let's return to the source, to that first calling of disciples, where our Lord will renew His call to us and strengthen our response.***

# Total Recall

By [Fr. Paul D. Scalia](#)  
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What happened on the shores of the Sea of Galilee (Mt 4:12-23) is normative for the Church. It was certainly normative for the fishermen themselves. **Jesus' calling set the course for the rest of their lives.** But it also applies more broadly to the Church herself. The Greek word for church – *ekklesia* – comes from the verb *to call*. **Members of the Church have been “called” – out of sin, out of the world, into communion with God.** So, we find essential aspects of what it means to be called in this calling of the first disciples.

**First, Christ is the center.** “Come after me,” he says so plainly. A literal translation would be something like, “Fall in behind me.” The meaning is clear: **they are to make him – and everything he says and does – the focus of their attention and the standard for their lives. He doesn't call them to an idea or plan. He doesn't direct their attention to a protocol or policy. He directs them to Himself.**

This is the master/apprentice model (once described by a master saying to his apprentice, “You're not going to learn this trade; you're going to learn *me*”). Jesus doesn't invite the Apostles to learn this or that thing *from* Him. He wants them to learn *Him*, so as to **imitate Him. Christian discipleship is not learned from a book. It's learned from Him. Even the Scriptures, the written Word of God, exist only to bring us into deeper knowledge of Him, the Incarnate Word.**

**To be a member of the Church means to place Christ at the center of all things.** Every work of the Church – her teachings, sacraments, and governance – is ultimately intended for this purpose, **to make her members better followers of Christ. To view the Church as having any other purpose (social justice, political advocacy, environmental activism, etc.) is to misunderstand and misrepresent her.**

Conversely, **to follow Christ means to be a member of the Church.** The Apostles knew Him directly. We know Him through his Mystical Body, the Church. As once in his human body he called to the fishermen, so now in his mystical body he calls to us. “Come after me” is a call to be faithful members of the Church.

**Second, discipleship requires change.** Our Lord doesn't tell the fishermen what they will do for Him. That will come later. For now, He tells them what He will do to them: “I will make you fishers of men.” The only promise of His call is that they will be changed. Their ability to respond to this call for change flows from that first conviction, that Jesus is worth following. **Because of their trust in Him, they are willing to be changed by Him.**



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**The perennial temptation for a disciple is to bend Christ to fit his life. Each of us is inclined to say, “Thus far and no further” to the Lord Himself.** That is, to limit the degree to which we will be changed and conformed to His teaching. A renewed discipleship means a renewed, “Thy will be done” in every

situation and within ourselves. **We cannot be His coworkers without being changed.**

**Third, natural virtues.** Our Lord calls the fishermen in terms that they understand. If He had declared, “I will make you preachers and evangelists and bishops, etc.,” they would not have understood. “Fishers of men” they understand. They know the effort, the long hours, the dogged fidelity that fishing requires. They grasp immediately what joining Him in his work will mean. **He incorporates what they already know and can already do into His divine call.** Discipleship means surrendering our natural virtues to Christ, and for Christ. **His grace doesn’t destroy but perfects nature.**

The Gospel mentions two “fishermen virtues” necessary for Christ’s disciples. First, Peter and Andrew were “casting a net into the sea.” There’s something adventurous and risky about that. The sea is a deep and mysterious place. They didn’t know what, if anything, they would catch. Discipleship requires that ability to risk something, to make an effort that might not pan out. **To cast the net without knowing what will happen.**

**Fourth, since we can’t have adventure all the time, Jesus calls James and John while they are mending – literally, preparing or readying – their nets for the next day’s work. Unlike the risky casting of the net, this is boring organizational work** on which so much else depends. **Discipleship is not always activity and adventure. At times we have to prepare and organize and arrange things.** Thus the necessary structure, organization, and laws of the Church. Without such things, the nets get tangled, and evangelization is compromised.

**Finally, discipleship requires detachment. Peter and Andrew followed “at once,” James and John “immediately.”** Their entire lives and livelihood were on those shores. Their friends and families were in those towns. But none of those held them back. **They left to follow Him.** “I don’t want to be a saint by halves!” Saint Therese exclaimed. But without a spirit of detachment – from possessions and pleasures, family and friends, and even our own will – that is precisely what we attempt. **There’s something holding us right now. To follow Him, we must abandon it.**

**We need to be recalled, renewed in our discipleship. Let's return to the source, to that first calling of disciples, where our Lord will renew His call to us and strengthen our response.**

**\*Image:** *The Sermon on the Sea of Galilee* by Jan Brueghel the Elder (copy after), 1600 – 1699 [Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands]

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