

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time – A

Name me something that you find fascinating.

I have been fascinated by music for a long time. Even music I have been listening to for a long time still has the power to fascinate me.

I listen to it and I hear things for the first time and marvel at the composer's genius.

Can you think of any person you find fascinating?

If someone is infatuated, then everything the other person does can come across as fascinating, even if their friends can't see it.

People we don't really know can be fascinating, too. I remember seeing Michael Jackson do his moon walk and I just couldn't figure out how he did it. I guess you could say I was fascinated by it, even though I was not fascinated by Michael Jackson himself.

Today's Gospel presents a scene of how fascinating Jesus must have been to his first followers: The fishermen he called to and invited them to follow him immediately left their nets and followed him.

There had to be something about him that they found fascinating.

Even when they got to know him better, the fascination did not go away.

They stayed with him. At one point, he even asked them if they were going to abandon him like everyone else was doing.

Peter responded, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of everlasting life."

As Christians, I think we have to allow ourselves to be fascinated by Jesus. That means giving ourselves the chance to learn what he was about, how he acted, what he said.

That's hard to do if we don't take some time familiarizing ourselves with the stories and episodes of his life.

And once we have familiarized ourselves with them, to go back to them time and time again to let them unfold their deeper meaning. That will probably take more than just listening to them once a week on Sunday.

I've read the Gospels—a lot. And it still happens often that I'll be reading a passage and something new comes to me—something I had not noticed before.

And I can often be amazed at the genius of Jesus—how he responds to those who opposed him, and how he shows God's love to those who need it.

A one-time read through will not cut it.

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Many people are happy to know that Jesus died for us and rose from the dead. They don't pay much attention to what happened before that.

But all of the Gospels, from start to finish, offer a whole string of jewels that are worth pondering, that have the ability to fascinate, and can lead us closer to the one who shows us how to be our best selves.

That same Jesus who fascinated his disciples and hearers is the one who rose from the dead and now lives forever.

All through history there have been people who have encountered him and been fascinated.

In fact, they say that their encounters with Jesus all had two things in common: they knew they had come into the presence of the Lord of all creation, the one who knew them better than they knew themselves, the one who called to them into a future that would take them out of their comfort zone.

And still they were fascinated and could not look away, could not get enough.

Nothing will make a bigger impact in your life, nothing will bring you farther forward in the life of grace than to let yourselves be fascinated by Jesus, to

follow where he calls and to let him guide your life.

Guaranteed.

Anybody interested? Then take the first step. Make a point of using the Gospels to get to know him better. Read them. A lot. Sit with them. Let them sink in and bring you to prayer.

And when you encounter Jesus, when he makes himself known to you, don't let the fear and trembling be the main thing. Let the fascination take hold and draw you to him.

You will never be the same.