



Wednesday Prayer

3rd Sunday after Epiphany – Shine light and love through our actions

...the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Matthew 4:16-19

Jesus begins his ministry with two significant steps. He links his ministry to the prophecy of Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet, to show all that his mission and ministry is aligned with the God of Abraham. He also doesn't try to strike out on his own. Instead, he immediately calls others to work with him. And he doesn't start with the religious leaders of the day, the Sadducees and Pharisees, but with people who are out working in the fishing trade.

Jesus calls us, too, in spite of our shortcomings, to be disciples and follow him. Through Jesus, we're also aligned to God's mission and ministry. We're called to be God's hands in the world to reach out to children and youth in our communities who don't have the resources to live safely. Through prayer, we can ask for God's strength and direction for ourselves and for young people who are vulnerable to those who might want to exploit them. Through educating and advocating, we follow Jesus' example to invite others to join us in reflecting his light into the dark corners of the world.

The task of preventing and ending sex trafficking and ministering to survivors is a big one, but not impossible. We often feel that we lack the skills or education needed to take on this ministry, but Jesus calls all of us to follow him, and promises to give us what we need to carry out God's will. So join with others by adding your voice in prayer, and your actions to educate and advocate as we follow Jesus together to protect all children and youth from harm.

Light of Christ, shine in hearts today to strengthen us and show us the way to best serve others. Shine your light through our efforts so others may be drawn out of the darkness of sex trafficking or other dangers of the world and into your light and love. Amen.

Written by Kay Kinkel, MA, MSW, Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and Mental Health Therapist with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota.