

Epiphany 3, Year A
Matthew 4: 12-23
January 27, 2008

Trinity Episcopal Church
Sonoma, California

At the Crossroads
A Sermon Preached by the Rev. Susan Allison-Hatch

I am so glad to be here together with you at this moment. I'm so glad we're here with one another at this crossroads in our life as a community. This is an important moment. Today we are formally marking the journey we are making together. Today we will take vows to support one another as we step into our journey to live fully the life God has called us to.

Later today our bishop will say to you, "You have been called to share in the church's mission to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. Join your rector, in prayer, in discerning a vision for this parish, and in calling forth the leadership, resources, and talents to carry out that vision." That's a big vow.

Then the bishop will say to me, "Do not forget the trust of those who have chosen you. Care alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor....Love and serve Christ's people. Nourish them, empower them for ministry and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come." Another big promise.

This is a big moment. These are important vows. Like those disciples at the sea of Galilee, we are invited to drop our nets and follow God's call to us as a community. Like Andrew and Simon and James and John, we are invited to follow Jesus in a journey of discipleship. And like them, we don't know the road ahead. We don't know what the landscape of our life will look like. We don't know the twists and turns it will take. We don't know the adventures we'll have. We don't know the challenges we will encounter. We don't even know what the delights will be.

As I think about all that we don't know about the road ahead, I'm reminded of a hymn I like to sing – Along the King's Highway. It goes like this:

We know not where the road will lead
We follow day by day,
Or where it ends: We only know
We walk the King's highway.

We know not if the way is long,
And no one else can say;
But rough or smooth, up hill or down,
We walk the King's highway.

There's so much we don't know about the road ahead, about the journey we're on. But think of what we do know. Each of us – each of one of us here – knows what it's like to go on a journey into the unknown. We've all gone on such journeys. They are part of life. Parenting, marriage, a move across the country, a serious illness – all journeys into the unknown. We know that twists and turns are part of life. We know that often the rough places in the road lead us to the deeper truths. And we know the gifts along the way – the unexpected vistas, the new sides you see in yourself and those who are with you on the journey.

That's important. We're not alone on this journey. We journey with God and we journey with one another. We have each other and we can draw on one another's strengths as we walk the road ahead. That's part of being in a community of discipleship.

There's something else we know about this path we are on. We know the One who calls us on the journey. We know the One who says to his disciples, to the ones in Galilee and to you and me as well, "Follow me." We know that He is faithful and with us to the end.

W.H. Auden once wrote

He is the Way. Follow Him through the Land of Unlikeness; You will see rare beasts, and have unique adventures.

He is the Truth. Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety; You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.

He is the Life. Love Him in the World of the Flesh; And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance with joy.

Let us together follow Him through the Land of Unlikeness and look with joyful hope to the rare beasts and unique adventures that we will surely meet along the way.

Let us together seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety knowing that He will meet us with open arms.

Let us dance with joy with the One who loves us into being. Amen.