

WEDNESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Holy Unrest

And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Mark 1:17-18

*You are Christian only when you believe that you have a role to play in the realization of this new kingdom and when you urge everyone you meet with a holy unrest to make haste, so that the promise might soon be fulfilled. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *With Open Hands*, 102)*

Even in the slow process of waiting and watching, there is a sense of urgency in our Christian living. The call has already gone out: "Follow me!" The kingdom of God is among us! We have a role; we must do our part. This role is not for some other day; this part we have to play is not something we can do later. Today is the day we must begin anew—to follow, to fish for people, to realize God's kingdom with a sense of "holy unrest."

Has anyone in your life been left behind? Does anyone need good news? Embrace them, speak to them, bring them with you into the bright light of God. We are Christians. This is what we do, and we begin again each day.

Lord Jesus, every day you call me to follow you. Give me ears to hear your voice and a heart to answer your call with a sense of holy unrest. Amen.

THURSDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Full of Faith

Then Mary said, "Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Luke 1:38

*And "faith," as the Greek word *pistis* shows, is an act of trust. It is the great "Yes" to the one who has explained the scriptures to us as scriptures that are about him. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *With Burning Hearts*, 59)*

There are several ways to understand the word *faith*—a word so essential to our life with God. Faith can mean *belief*: we have faith that God exists. Faith can mean *trust*: we have faith in God's care for us. Faith can also mean *faithfulness*—a great "Yes"—a pledge of total fidelity—heart, mind, soul and body. This is the faith of Abraham in ancient days, of Moses in the desert, of Mary at the Annunciation, of Jesus on the cross and of Paul in prison. This is our faith too, when we refuse to leave the side of Christ no matter how hard we may be pulled by distractions, inclinations or other ways of life.

Faith is both a gift and a decision. May we always live out this faith—graciously given to us—and deliberately live each day with heartfelt fidelity.

Here I am, Lord. I believe in you. I trust in you. I promise, with your help, to be faithful to you. Amen.