

I Didn't Ask for This Job

Intro. If we had half an hour to pack *one* bag, what would we take? We need some more information: For *how long*? *Where* are we going? And a very important question: is there a place to charge the phone? Some of us could do it; many of us couldn't, even if we had *several* hours! With the multiple hurricanes we have had more of us should think about what is really necessary for us to survive if we had to leave home quickly for a few days. Military people call it a "go bag," a small bag kept packed with a few changes of clothes and other essentials that can be supplemented quickly with a few last minute items.

I. In their time with the Lord, the apostles were simply *observers* to his teaching and healing. Suddenly he told them it was their turn to take the wheel. What a surprise that must have been. The Lord cut their preparation time significantly with his

short list of things they could take. A walking stick and one pair of sandals. Total packing time, what? Thirty seconds. The fishermen probably had it easier; they already left their stuff back at the lake. The list of things the disciples *couldn't* take was much longer. No food, no backpack, no money, no second shirt. This was not a Navy SERE exercise: Survive, Evade, Resist and Escape, but darn close. The Apostles weren't abandoned in the wilderness by the Lord. He gave them the most important tool they would need: a share in his *authority* and his *power*. It was their compass so they would not lose their way. Another gift the Lord gave them was a partner. He didn't send them out alone. It wasn't the issue of safety; it was the support of a fellow disciple. When they came back to that house at the end of the day, whether successful or not, they could debrief, prepare for the next day and maybe share a cup of wine together.

Concl. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptizer, was born into the tribe of the priests. He had little choice but to follow his own father. Today we heard Amos say *he* didn't come from a family of prophets, that he didn't **ask** for the job. God called him and he found he was good at it. Often we think only certain people are "born" into the job or get the call to lead prayer and spread God's word. Until fairly recently, in the last fifty years, most Catholics looked to priests and sisters and brothers to lead prayer and provide religious education. Today's gospel teaches that discipleship is *everybody's* "job." *Every one of us* has been given the responsibility to share the Word of God with the world. Through Baptism we have been "born" into this job. The first and most important thing the Lord gave to the Apostles was his *authority*, the power to preach the Word and to heal others. As disciples we are not asked to hit the streets with just a walking stick and flip flops. God

has given us his authority to each of us. That, and the grace given to us in Baptism, Confirmation and Communion, prayer and good works are what's in **our** disciple "go bag." The original disciples must have been amazed at the miracles they did with only a walking stick and a pair of sandals. If we put the same trust in the Lord, when we leave home each day, we should be able to pack as lightly and expect miracles.

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