**3 Epiphany Jan 26 2014**

[**Isaiah 9:1-4**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%209:1-4&version=NRSV)**;**[**Ps 27:1, 5-13**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2027:1,%205-13&version=NRSV)**;**[**1 Corin 1:10-18**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%201:10-18&version=NRSV)**;**[**Matt 4:12-23**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%204:12-23&version=NRSV)**; Rev Mary Trainor**

We live in a restless time: the news, music, media, and even research reports on our health issues all reflect this. Our restlessness causes us anxiety, depression, relationship and financial issues, weight and attention deficit issues, substance abuse. This week the cover of Time Magazine was entitled, "the Mindfulness Revolution:" it reported on the benefits of daily meditation in light of all the multitasking we do. Multitasking has become part of our restless lives. It seems to have become the norm to do four things all at the same time: like, texting, reading, eating and talking. Sound familiar? But research has shown that our brains become less healthy if we frequently multitask, and this can cause darkness in us.

In our Scripture reading from Isaiah this morning (and in the Gospel too) we heard about "***the people who walked in darkness."*** Who were these people? They were the people who lived in the fertile land near the sea of Galilee (in OT times it was called Zebulun and Naphtali), and back in the time of Isaiah (700 B.C.) they were terribly oppressed after the Assyrian invasion. People were killed in battle, imprisoned or exiled, families were divided, supplies were short; the previously contented rural existence was replaced by cruel treatment and depravation. They walked in darkness, some of us walk in darkness. Our Scriptures today do not end with mentioning the people who walked in darkness, for the story goes on. We need not be discouraged about the darkness in our midst. Isaiah continued: "***the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light....on them light has shined....light has dawned....the yoke of their burden (was) broken***." What was the great light? It was Jesus, the Messiah, who came to carry our burden, to forgive our sins, to give us life. Isaiah was prophesying the arrival of Jesus, who is here with us. Now, in the Epiphany season, we particularly marvel at the light of God's glory and love. As our Psalm for today says, "***The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life***." Our lives change for the better when we let in the Light of Christ, and that light is all about our relationship with the One Lord, the One God.

The people of the church in Corinth (as we see in the passage from Paul's letter read this morning) had a darkness overtake them too, and this darkness was because of fragmentation, of not receiving and following the pure unified Light of Christ. The darkness was restless in-fighting: internal divisions in among those in church. What happened here is that people were restlessly grouping into different camps, around different leaders and not unified under Christ. Jesus gives the answer: the answer is Him. He says, "***Has Christ been divided?"*** No. There is one head of our faith, of our church, of our lives: that is Jesus. There is none other.

In today's Gospel, Jesus was continuing in His ministry teaching, healing, and bringing His Light into the lives of people He saw. He met people where they were, in their daily lives. In this one, he meets fishermen. Ah, it is a restful and refreshing thing to think about fishing on a day like today, with our wind and snow and cold. Picture sitting out there in a boat in a calm blue lake, birds soaring overhead, with the anchor down, waiting. The fishing rod content in our hands. The only thing we are doing is watching to see if the rod bends. Nothing else fills our brains. We are just there, fully present to the task at hand. Jesus encountered fishermen Andrew and Peter, who understood this life; in their case their livelihood depended upon them catching fish and the Sea of Galilee was a huge lake! Our Gospel tells us that on this particular day, in response to Jesus' invitation, ***"immediately they left their nets and followed Him."*** Jesus invited them in this way, "***Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."***  Fishing for people is sharing the message of Christ's Light with others. This requires some of the same kind of skills that fishing for fish involves: being equipped, showing up, being fully present, listening, watching, waiting, and then at the right time acting. One difference is that the fish in our lakes are not longing to be caught, but the people around us are longing to know Christ. In this restless, multi-tasking society, people are longing to be fished for.

Today, on the one day a year when we all meet for our annual meeting, we reflect on our purpose for being here. This is our purpose. Please turn to pages 854-855 in the Book of Common prayer. You see here really two whole pages devoted to explaining the church. At the top of 855, we see two Questions about the mission of the church. Let's read the answers together; "**The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ**" and "**The church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love."** This is accomplished through all of us, the church's members. This is what we are doing here, this is our purpose.

Jesus is saying to us too, "***Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."***  We are surrounded by people who are restless, are experiencing darkness; there is only one solution and that is Jesus Christ. St Augustine said: "**Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee."** Experience the Light of Christ in your own life, rest in Him, and share this Good News with others. Fulfill your mission, with God's help. Amen.