

3 Epiphany B
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Runaway Bunnies

Mark 1: 14 -20

Last Sunday afternoon, I ran into a couple who looked completely frazzled. It seems that just as they were headed out to church, their driveway filled up with police cars. "Who called 911?" an officer shouted. The look on their two – year old's face said it all. It seems that she had taken her mom's words literally when, rushing to get her into the car so they wouldn't be late, mom said, "C'mon, act like it's an emergency," and she did. As the parents apologized, the officer smiled, "*It's OK, even if we knew who called, we still would have come. That's the way 911 works – you call, we come.*"

When Jesus called the four fishermen in today's gospel story, they responded the same way. They didn't say, "*Hmmm, I wonder if he's the real deal,*" or "*Can you come back tomorrow, we're busy,*" they just followed him.

Don't you wonder if you would have answered the same way? We think of the first disciples as superheroes – when Jesus calls, they drop everything and follow. But in truth, these four guys were just ordinary fishermen. This story isn't about superheroes – it's about God's amazing power to create miracles within very ordinary people. It's about God inspiring us to be better than we think we are, to do better than we think we can.

It was the same miracle we all witnessed at Trinity when we gathered all of you together last month and said, "*Through the transition process, you've told us your three greatest passions are fighting hunger, supporting children and serving seniors. So let's form three "God Squads" and ask that every single one of you join one of them.*" And you did. And when we sent your pledge cards out, we asked the same question, and every one of you signed up for one of these ministries. You're the only parish I know in Connecticut – or anywhere for that matter – with 100% saying "Yes." Let's face it, that's a miracle.

These are the miracles we can create every day, just by saying "Yes," by cooperating with God and doing our part, the same way those simple fishermen did.

From the time each of the fishermen was a small child, God stayed close, encouraging them to listen for God's call. Going to school in the synagogue, learning prayers and bible verses – God was sowing seeds in their hearts, teaching them to recognize and respond to the God in other people. As they grew, they must have said "Yes" in hundreds of ways – whenever they were kind, or forgave someone, or shared some of what they had with those who needed it more than them.

God grew generous hearts inside them, helping them learn the most important lesson in the world – that we’re happiest, that we’re the best we can be, when we’re helping other people be the best they can be.

So by the time Jesus came by that morning and said *“Follow me, and I’ll make you fish for people,”* maybe they were so hungry for that kind of happiness only God provides, they couldn’t resist.

It’s no different with us. Most of the time, we’re pretty clueless about the fact that God is so near. So clueless, we forget to keep taking in God’s love; we forget to listen for God’s call. But no matter how clueless we are, God stays very close, keeps loving us into being better people than we believe we can be, keeps helping us say “Yes,” over and over again.

Kind of like the mother rabbit in Margaret Wise Brown’s book, *The Runaway Bunny*. Her little bunny was feeling so grown up, he thought he didn’t need his mother anymore. One day he said, *“I’m running away.”* She replied, *“If you run away, I’ll run after you. For you are my little bunny.”* The bunny laughed. *“If you run after me, I’ll become a fish in a trout stream, and I’ll swim away from you.”* *“If you become a fish in a trout stream,”* replied his mother, *“I’ll become a fisherman and I’ll fish for you.”*

Well, they go on like this for the whole book. At the end, the little bunny figures out the perfect escape. *“I’ll join a circus,”* he says, *“and fly away on a flying trapeze.”* *“If you fly away on a flying trapeze,”* mother rabbit replies, *“I’ll be a tightrope walker, and I’ll walk across the air to you.”* *“Ahhh,”* says the little bunny victoriously, *“If you become a tightrope walker, and walk across the air, I’ll become a little boy and run into the house.”* And mother rabbit smiles, *“If you become a little boy and run into the house, I’ll become your mother and catch you in my arms and hug you.”*

That’s what saying “Yes” to Jesus’ call is all about. In the midst of our cluelessness about the availability of God’s abundant love, even as we persist in acting like “runaway bunnies,” Jesus is always one step ahead of us.

“If you become a little boy and run into the house,” said the mother bunny, *“I’ll become your mother and catch you in my arms and hug you.”*

“Shucks,” says the little bunny, *“I might as well just stay where I am and be your little bunny.”* And so he did. *“Have a carrot,”* said his mother.