

## ***Come Down to the Lakeshore***

The Gospel for this 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany is Mark 1:14-20, an account of Jesus' calling of his first disciples with the words "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Our sermon hymn is "*You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore*", a beautiful Spanish hymn with a lovely, gentle rhythm reminiscent of a slowly rocking boat near the lakeshore.

Both the music and lyrics of this hymn were composed by Cesareo Gabarain (1936-1991), a Spanish priest who was one of the best known composers of Spanish liturgical music following the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. He was inspired by the feelings and actions of the humble people he met during his ministry. Father Gabarain served as a college and nursing home chaplain, a parish priest and a professor of religious education in his native Spain. As a parish priest he was known for his athleticism and work with young people. His ministry to cyclists is legendary, taking so many tours with them that he became known as "priest of the cyclists", especially spending many summer vacations ministering to cyclists participating in the Tour de France.

"Pescador de Hombres" ("Fisher of Men"), the original Spanish title, was written in 1979 and is easily the most popular of the over 500 liturgical songs Gabarain composed. "*You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore*" tells the story of Jesus calling his disciples. He sought out ordinary people to do extraordinary work in his name. Jesus knew of their abilities and of their meager wealth but chose them to be his closest companions. It is a hymn of commitment and discipleship.

Singing this hymn, we feel ourselves to be right there with the rough and humble fishermen by the Sea of Galilee. With no weapons or other trappings of the rich and powerful, we know ourselves to be workers, one with the poor of the earth. Jesus smiles, calls each of us by name. By the end of the hymn, we have pledged our own hands to do the work of caring and comfort. As found in the Scripture, Gabarain captures the total obedience of disciples and their willingness to give up everything: (Mark 1: 16-20) "Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him." The hymn entreats us to follow Christ with the same obedience and commitment. The refrain after each verse is a call to surrender to Jesus in response to his command to follow him.

*You have come down to the lakeshore seeking neither the wise nor the wealthy,  
but only asking for me to follow.*

***Refrain: Sweet Lord, you have looked into my eyes; kindly smiling, you've called out my name ...  
on the sand I have abandoned my small boat; now with you, I will seek other seas.***

*You know full well what I have, Lord; neither treasure nor weapons for conquest,  
just these my fish nets and will for working. (Refrain)*

*You need my hands, my exhaustion, working love for the rest of the weary –  
a love that's willing to go on loving. (Refrain)*

*You who have fished other waters; you, the longing of souls that are yearning;  
O loving Friend, you have come to call me. (Refrain)*

Gracious Lord, help us to be open to your call and to respond with joy and eagerness to serve you with love and devotion.

**Sunday worship with Holy Communion**

**10 AM**

**Annual Congregation Meeting and Luncheon to follow the service.**