Many professions and vocations have internships or apprenticeships. Although we do learn valuable skills in these internships, one of the primary purposes of them is to give the intern an opportunity to see, firsthand, what it is like to be a person in that profession. We can read books about the profession or watch movies about people who are in that profession, but the images we get from books and movies are often skewed. For example, I once served a parish that had a JAG and an NCIS agent as members of the congregation – both said their day-to-day jobs were quite different from what you see on TV. I was fortunate enough to have internships (or field ed) experiences toward becoming a priest. They were very helpful in that those things which I had seen a priest do as a member of the congregation represented only a small part of what the priest actually does. Being able to actually spend time with rectors helped me to learn about all that actually occurs in the day in the life of a priest and to understand the identity of a priest. Seeing and experiencing is a good way of learning. It’s also a good way of learning to live into a vocation or identity to which you’ve been called.

In John’s version of the calling of the first disciples, the disciples, after being told by John the Baptist about Jesus, ask Jesus a question about his lifestyle – where are you staying? Rather than simply answering that question, Jesus invites them to “Come and see.” They come to see where he is staying and then they hang around with him for the next three years. As part of that small band of people closest to Jesus, they are able to see the work and life of Jesus up close, day to day, and to begin to live into the vocation and identity to which they had been called – that of disciples. Peter, for example, wasn’t much of faithful, sturdy rock when he originally “came to see” Jesus, but as he continued to watch and to live with Jesus, through the grace of God, he changed and became that unshakeable rock.

Jesus invites us to come and see, too. When we get close to Jesus, through our own prayers and through reading of Scripture, we see some things that Jesus did and does. Jesus healed and still heals. Jesus loves people, regardless of their circumstances. Jesus prays often – in public and in private. Jesus teaches logically. Jesus doesn’t let himself get distracted by those who are against him. Jesus rests peacefully despite storms tossing the boat where he is lying. Jesus doesn’t quit when the going gets tough.

As we “come and see” Jesus, we learn the ways of Jesus – we learn how to live as people who carry his name – we learn to live into our calling as Christians. We also learn the most effective way to lead others to Jesus. Others aren’t led to Jesus by what we preach at them. They aren’t led by us quoting Scripture to them. They are led through our relationships with them and what they learn about us by watching how we live every day. They learn by “coming and seeing us.” They watch us heal through kind words and actions. They watch how we love others, despite their circumstances. They watch how often we pray in public and they look for the fruits that come out of a life of intense private prayer. They listen to see if, when appropriate, we can articulate our faith logically and clearly, without defensiveness. They see whether we become distracted from our Christian walk by antagonists. For example, they watch how we react when someone cuts in front of us in line or when others beat us out for that promotion? Or when we are tempted to do things that are wrong just to fit in with the crowd. They watch how calm we are when we face the storms of life – do we seem to rest peacefully and safely in the hands of our God or does our faith crumble. Finally, they watch to see whether we stick with our calling even when times are tough.

When we come and see Jesus and hang around with him, we learn to live into our calling as disciples --- to take on identity in Christ. We learn from the Master. We are continually as we come closer and see more clearly. As we live into that identity, we become the best that God created us to be. And our lives offer those around us the opportunity to come and see Jesus in us, too.

Amen