



## The people who bring us to Jesus

By Peter Rodrigues

Growing up in a traditional Catholic family, I always felt a strong affinity for my patron saint, St Peter. I liked that I had been named after the one that was first among the apostles, the one Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom to, to lead the Church.

But at Masses with my family when I was young I wasn't so keen on hearing the stories about how he betrayed Jesus, how Jesus once called him 'Satan', and having to listen to St John crow about how he was "the one that Jesus loved" (presumably, the best!). I wanted St Peter to be the best, always right and perfect, the first among the apostles in every way.

This weekend we hear St John's account of the calling of Andrew and Simon (Peter). In this story St Peter is honoured, but he's not doing anything especially great. It's Andrew who responds to Jesus' invitation to "Come and see", with great enthusiasm, and immediately seeks out his brother Simon and takes him to Jesus.

It doesn't matter to me now that St Peter wasn't always the first and best. I know now, as he learnt, what is more important than always being right or a success in the eyes of the people around me.

How did I find out? It took a while of searching as a young adult. University was eye opening, and that world challenged me. I was hungry for information that would somehow justify my faith and my beliefs which deep down I knew to be true, but struggled to explain to others.

Marilyn, who had already begun to find some answers to her own search for authentic faith, invited me with some others from our parish young adults group to a retreat run by a Discalced Carmelite priest at the Mt Carmel Retreat Centre at Varroville.

From that weekend, a friendship developed with the order and especially the founders of its reform St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross. These saints taught that life as a Catholic Christian is ultimately grounded in a real friendship with God. A God who, through our baptism dwells within us.

Through them I realised what I was actually looking for. It wasn't "what", but "who". Just as Andrew took his brother Simon to Jesus, these people brought me to Jesus. They helped me to realise that great prowess in evangelising others wasn't what I needed. I needed to experience the total love of God, who dwelt in me, and was waiting for me to respond more fully every day to his invitation to friendship.

My parents had me baptised and faithfully formed me to the point that I was able to recognise Jesus when I met him in this deeper way as an adult with responsibility for my

own life and faith. Marilyn and I have tried to do the same for our children. We know the most important thing we can do as parents is to bring our children to Jesus Christ to the best of our ability. And we trust, as in our case, that He will take care of the rest!