

Homily based on the readings from July 7, 2025 (Genesis 28.10-22a;
Matthew 9.18-26)

Today's first reading presents an interesting set of circumstances. Jacob, the younger son of Isaac and Rebecca, is hurrying to get away from home. After offending his older brother Esau, he is trying to reach the safety of his uncle Laban's house as quickly as possible. He is definitely *not* looking to engage in any life-altering religious experiences.

Nevertheless, that is exactly what he gets. Pausing briefly to rest for the night, he beholds a vision of a stairway "reaching to the heavens" and receives a promise of divine protection. More importantly, God reaffirms the commitment he made to Jacob's grandfather Abraham:

[Your descendants] shall be as plentiful as the dust of the earth,
and through them you shall spread out east and west, north and
south.

In you and your descendants

all the nations of the earth shall find blessing.

This promise resounds to the present day, as both Christianity and Judaism are rooted in the covenant God made with the children of Israel.

When he put his head on that rock, it is almost certain that Jacob was *not* anticipating an event that would fundamentally alter the course of human history. Nevertheless, God works on his own timetable, according to his own divine plan. When we think about the great saints of our faith, very few – if any – could have possibly predicted the calls they would receive. Just this past Friday, we heard the account of Christ summoning Saint Matthew. As you know, Matthew was simply sitting at his customs post – presumably engaged in the ordinary, tedious affairs of a low-level bureaucrat. It is highly unlikely that, when he woke up that morning, he was expecting an encounter that would lead to his becoming an apostle, an evangelist, and ultimately a martyr.

Nevertheless, Christ knew exactly whom he was calling and what his mission would be – and Saint Matthew had the courage and the faith to follow him.

In our own lives today, we must not attempt to limit God to the times and places that *we* find convenient or appropriate – when we are at church or on retreat or actively seeking to discern the Lord’s will. We must be ready to receive God’s call, every hour of every day – no matter how rushed or how busy we imagine ourselves to be. We may not witness angels going up and down from heaven – or see Christ physically walking through our place of business – but if we open our hearts to the Lord, he will *surely* lead us where we need to go.