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The Calling of the Disciples in Mark 1:16–20, Matt 4:18– 22, and Luke 5:1–11

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Abstract

The calling of two pairs of brothers to follow Jesus is the first individual event in Jesus' public ministry reported in Mark's Gospel. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke adopt Mark's account, but place different specific emphases. The three synoptic Gospels also point out that from the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, women also followed him.

Keywords: Synoptic Gospels; Discipleship of Jesus; Vocation narratives



Jüngerberufungen in Mk 1,16–20; Mt 4,18–22 und Lk 5,1–11

Zusammenfassung

Die Berufung von zwei Brüderpaaren in die Nachfolge Jesu ist das erste Einzelereignis im öffentlichen Wirken Jesu, von dem das Markusevangelium berichtet. Die Evangelien nach Matthäus und Lukas übernehmen den Bericht von Markus, setzen aber unterschiedliche spezifische Akzente. Die drei synoptischen Evangelien weisen auch darauf hin, dass vom Anfang des Wirkens Jesu in Galiläa an auch Frauen ihm nachfolgen.

Schlagwörter: Synoptische Evangelien; Nachfolge Jesu; Berufungserzählungen

Using several examples, the synoptic gospels show us how people enter the discipleship of Jesus. When we compare the calling narratives in the gospels with each other, we recognize similarities but also significant differences.

1. The Calling of the Disciples in the Gospel of Mark

The appearance of Jesus in public, following his forty-day sojourn in the desert, is described by the Gospel of Mark in Mark 1:14–15, and is combined with a programmatic statement about Jesus' entire ministry:

*14 After John was delivered up, Jesus went to Galilee; he proclaimed the Gospel of God 15 and said: The time is fulfilled; the Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the Gospel!*¹

When the Kingdom of God is the subject of speech, the great hopes and the longing of Israel resonate with it: God will deliver his people from threatening powers, will liberate them from suffering and bring them together anew. And the people that places itself under his sovereignty and his protection will experience peace and salvation in a comprehensive way. This Kingdom of God has drawn close; indeed, it is already present incipiently in the arrival and ministry of Jesus.

In Mark 1:16–20, directly subsequent and also elucidating what “repenting” and “believing” can mean, Mark reports the first specific event in Jesus' public ministry, namely, the calling of two pairs of brothers into his discipleship. In doing so, Mark emphasizes what is characteristic for his portrayal of Christ: Disciples are from the very beginning with Jesus. He never appears alone, but only in the company of people who follow him; and he does nothing without them. It already is apparent that he needs fellow workers. This is the wording of Mark 1:16–20:

16 As Jesus went along on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, who were casting their nets on the sea; they were, namely, fishermen. 17 He said to them: Come here, follow me! I will make you fishers of human beings. 18 And immediately, they left their nets lying there and followed after him. 19 When he went a ways further, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; they were in their boat and were putting their nets in order. 20 He called them immediately and they left their father Zebedee and his day laborers behind in the boat and followed after Jesus.

Mark 1:16–18 – An important issue for Mark already is heard in the verb “to go along”/“to pass by”: The way is a symbol for Jesus' mission. Jesus' “seeing” is not simply perception or observation, but rather an attentive act of seeing that displays interest in the pair of brothers. To encounter his glance must be an important event for both. If it were otherwise, it would be

1 All citations from the Bible are translated from the (German) Revidierten Einheitsübersetzung (EÜ 2016) [Revised Ecumenical Translation].

hard to explain the fact that they spontaneously follow his call. Both feel sympathy for him and have confidence in him, at first glance so to speak. The encounter in the act of seeing also lets them sense that he knows their daily situation and understands them. And even though Jesus' initiative is described only briefly, it still lets one suspect that a trusting relationship arises. This is the basis and precondition for the subsequent calling.

"Come here! Follow me (*opisō mou*)!" (Mark 1:17).² These are the first words that Jesus speaks in the gospel. Jesus also connects a promise with this call: He will teach the two so that they can be "fishers of human beings." Their fisherman's profession is, so to speak, "redirected". In a figurative sense, they will remain true to their previous work. The image of the fisher of human beings perhaps arouses negative associations for a male or female reader. The entrapment in a net lets one think of the robbery of freedom. The metaphor of fishing, however, is a positive sign and alludes to the biblical promise of the gathering of the scattered people of God, similar to what is indicated in the parable of the fishing net in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 13:47). Jesus will enable both to proclaim the Kingdom of God so that a gathering movement comes into being.

They follow the call "immediately"/"instantly" (one of Mark's favorite words) by leaving their nets (Mark 1:18). This conduct is exemplary for all the calling stories. To respond to Jesus' call is connected with an act of letting go. One must be able to leave something behind and to gain some distance from it in order to become free for the one who calls.

The verb "to follow after" (*akoloutheō*) really means "to follow"/"to come after someone"/"to come after". In Mark it always designates the relationship to Jesus.³ The term discipleship stands in connection with a way metaphor: Jesus goes ahead of the disciples.

Mark 1:19–20 – In this case Mark subsequently tells a second time in a similar manner of the call of a pair of brothers. He emphasizes already in a literary sense the significance of the discipleship of Jesus' followers. Once again, Jesus' initiative is described through his selecting act of "seeing". Once again, his gaze takes place in an everyday situation. While in the first narrative Simon and Andrew are described to be at the beginning of their work (casting their nets), the pair of brothers now is shown at the end of their working day (repairing nets, putting them in order). This is perhaps an incidental narrative detail, yet it suggests that a calling can occur in an everyday situation.

The word now used for the call to discipleship, that ensues "immediately"/"instantly", is the weighty biblical term "to call" (*kaleō*). In the first narrative the verb "to leave"/"to go away" (*aphiēmi*) is used. What is indicated by this, is the fact that discipleship (attachment to Jesus) presupposes a letting go, a distance to what was before (not only to things [nets] but even to

2 We find the expression "follow me"/"come after me" (*opisō mou*) also in Mark 8:33, where Peter is called once again to discipleship, and in Mark 8:34, where Jesus says: "If one desires to come after me, then he should deny himself, take up his cross, and follow after me."

3 The New Testament reports about several pupil relationships (pupils of the Apostles), but the word "to follow" remains reserved for the relationship to Jesus.

persons [father]). To follow Jesus, or to go “after him/behind him” (*opisō autou*) (so literally in Mark 1:20), means at the same time going away from a familiar place and life context. What remains unanswered is the question whether this is a temporary or a permanent act of letting go.

The narrative of the calling of Levi in Mark 2:13–15 is comparable to the reports in Mark 1:16–20:

13 Jesus went out again to the sea. Multitudes of people came to him there and he taught them. 14 As he went along further, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting in his tax office and said to him: Follow me! Levi stood up and followed him. 15 And as Jesus reclined at table in his house, there were many tax-collectors and sinners dining together with him and his disciples; there were, namely, many who followed him.

Mark 2:13–14 – The similar geographical setting already shows that this short narrative is related to the two previous call narratives. The act of “going further”/“passing by” takes place in a similar manner as in the first call (Mark 1:16): near to the sea. Jesus’ “seeing” is once again a seeing interested in the person and his situation. Once again, this creates spontaneously a trusting relationship that is the precondition for the immediate compliance with the call and for the disengagement from the previous profession (“to stand up”) connected with it. The calling event is described extremely briefly and without any details. The decisive verb “to follow”, used two times in a row, is even more of consequence.

Does Jesus need Levi, too, as a fellow worker? In contrast to the two pairs of brothers, he is not taken up by Jesus into the close circle of the Twelve. Later on he is no longer mentioned at all. In the example of Levi we see that there are different ways of calling, and that being Jesus’ disciple also can be realized in secret.

The narratives of the calling of the two pairs of brothers (Mark 1:16–20) and of Levi (Mark 2:13–15) have three common structural elements:

1. Jesus’ initiative: Going along/going further Jesus “sees” the named persons in their everyday situations (casting out nets, repairing nets, sitting in the tax office).
2. His call to discipleship: “Come here, follow me!” and “Follow after me!”
3. The immediate compliance with the call: Simon and Andrew immediately leave their nets lying about and follow Jesus. James and John leave their father with his day laborers behind and follow Jesus. Levi stands up and follows Jesus (*akoloutheō*).

These three call narratives are reminiscent of 1 Kings 19:19–21, the calling of Elisha by Elijah following the latter’s encounter with God on Mt. Horeb:

19 As Elijah departed from there, he met Elisha, the son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen and he himself was with the twelfth. In passing by him, Elijah threw his mantle over him. 20 Elisha immediately left the oxen, followed quickly after Elijah, and asked of him: Let me give my father and my mother a farewell kiss; then I

will follow you. Elijah answered: Go, turn back! For what have I done to you? 21 Elisha went away from him, took his two oxen, and slaughtered them. He cooked the flesh with the yoke of the oxen and gave it to the people to eat. Then he stood up, followed Elijah and entered into his service.

In the Greek translation (Septuagint) of 1 Kings 19:20 Elisha says: “I will kiss my father and follow after you (*akolouthēō*).” And at the end of 1 Kings 19:21 it says: “And he set off and went after (*opisō*) Elijah.”

Here we can recognize a structure similar to the first calls of the disciples in the Gospel of Mark:

1. Initiative on the part of Elijah: He encounters Elisha in an everyday situation (plowing).
2. The call is combined with a symbolic action: Elijah throws his mantle over Elisha.
3. The immediate compliance with the call: Elisha “follows” Elijah (*akolouthēō* and *opisō*).

The farewell meal that Elisha gives can be compared with the meal in the house of Simon and Andrew (Mark 1:29–31) and with the banquet given by Levi (Mark 2:15–17).

The call of the disciples at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark lets us recognize that Jesus does not appear as a teacher (rabbi) and miracle-worker who, in addition, is also surrounded by a circle of followers and pupils. From the beginning of his public ministry it is much more like he calls people to follow him in order to prepare them and to form them for a certain task.

We can neither class the manner in which Jesus calls people to follow him as a (temporary) rabbi-pupil relationship nor can we compare it with the relationship (which rests on political goals and is rather anonymous) between a popular (Zealot) leader and his throng of followers (cf. Acts 5:36–37 – Theudas and Judas the Galilean), but rather we can most easily interpret it in analogy with the calling of Elisha to be a prophet.⁴

In the call of the disciples nothing less occurs than what happens in the particular calling of a prophet. Like Elisha, Jesus’ disciples receive the dignity and the mission reserved for a prophet.

Basically, following Jesus in discipleship is unique in its radicality. It means a consistent communion with him in life, the way, and fate.

2. The Calling of the First Disciples in the Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew takes over to a great extent what is reported in the Gospel of Mark but has a particular emphasis. This is also shown in Matt 4:12–22 in the portrayal of Jesus’ public appearance after his forty-day sojourn in the desert:

12 When Jesus heard that John had been delivered up, he returned to Galilee. 13 He left Nazareth in order to live in Capernaum, which is by the sea in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 For, it was to be fulfilled what was said by the prophet Isaiah:

4 His complete installation as a prophet occurs only after Elijah is caught up to Heaven – 2 Kings 2:1–18.

15 The land of Zebulun and of Naphtali, / the road near the sea, the region beyond the Jordan, / Galilee of the Gentiles:

16 The people who sat in darkness, / has seen a bright light; / to those who lived in the kingdom of the shadow of death, / a light has appeared.

17 *From then on, Jesus began to proclaim: Repent! For, the Kingdom of Heaven is near.*

18 *As Jesus went along at the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were about to cast their net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 19 Then he said to them: Come here, follow me! I will make you fishers of human beings.*

20 *Immediately, they left their nets lying and followed him.*

21 *As he went along further, he saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; they were with their father Zebedee in their boat and were putting their nets in order. He called them 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Jesus.*

Matt 4:12 – The verb “deliver”/“deliver up” will play an important role later in the story of Jesus’ passion (for example Matt 17:22; 20:18–19; 26:45) and therefore indicates a parallelism in regard to the path of suffering.

Matt 4:13–16 – As in Jesus’ living in Nazareth (Matt 2:23), his living (*katoikeō*) in Capernaum is interpreted with a (typical for Matthew) citation of fulfillment. The (fairly free) citation of Isa 8:23–9:1 points to the fact that Jesus’ mission also pertains to the “Gentiles” and to people who dwell in darkness and “in the kingdom of the shadow of death”. The Gospel of Matthew emphasizes that Jesus’ existence among people means salvation for them. Even before Jesus appears in public with his message and his messianic ministry, the fact of his living and his presence in the midst of the population of the fishermen’s village Capernaum is alone like a “bright (literally: great) light” that “appears” to them.

Matt 4:17 – A portent of the subsequent proclamation of the “Kingdom of Heaven” is given with the explanation of Jesus’ living in Capernaum. The Kingdom of Heaven, that has come near and was announced already by John the Baptist (Matt 3:2), is connected inseparably with Jesus and with his presence among the people. It is – as will be shown in the further course of the Gospel of Matthew – embodied in him, so to speak.

Following this summary statement about the beginning of Jesus’ proclamation, Matthew discusses the calling of disciples as the first individual event in Jesus’ public ministry.

Matt 4:18–22 – The portrayal of the calling of the first disciples differs only slightly from that in the gospel of Mark (Mark 1:16–20). Along with more or less linguistic differences, what attracts attention is the fact that, in Matthew’s portrayal, the father of James and John is also together with them in the boat and puts the nets in order. The father, thus, is mentioned twice. Matthew drops the reference to the day laborers that we find in Mark. Striking is the fact that Matthew

uses the verb “to follow” (*akoloutheō*) (Matt 4:20 and 4:22) and thereby places a greater emphasis on this verb. He replaces the formulation in Mark that James and John – literally translated – go away “after him (=Jesus)”/“behind him” (*opisō autou*) (Mark 1:20) with the statement that they “follow” him (*akoloutheō*).

With these calling narratives Matthew, as does Mark, emphasizes what is characteristic for his portrayal of Christ: Disciples are from the very beginning with Jesus. And it now already becomes apparent that Jesus needs fellow workers in proclamation: “The Kingdom of Heaven is near” (cf. Matt 10:7).

In Matt 9:9–13 Matthew takes over, with several linguistic changes, the narrative transmitted by Mark of the calling of Levi (Mark 2:13–17) but makes a significant change of the name. Matt 9:9:

“As Jesus went further, he saw a man by the name of Matthew sitting in the tax office and said to him: Follow me (*akoloutheō*)! And Matthew stood up and followed him (*akoloutheō*).” The name Levi is changed to Matthew. The latter is, as we read in Matt 10:2–3, one of the twelve apostles. According to ecclesiastical tradition, he is also the author of the Gospel of Matthew.

3. The Calling of the First Disciples in the Gospel of Luke – Luke 5:1–11

After the summary statement, that Jesus proclaims the gospel of “the kingdom of God” in the cities and synagogues (Luke 4: 43–44), it is reported in Luke 5:1–11 about the wonderful catch of fish and about the calling of the first disciples:

1 Now it came about: As the crowd of people pressed Jesus and wanted to hear the word of God, he stood by the Sea of Gennesaret 2 and saw two boats lying on the shore. The fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Jesus got into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon: Put out into the deep water and cast out your nets for a catch! 5 Simon answered him: Master, we have worked the whole night long and have caught nothing. But, at your word, I will cast out the nets. 6 They did this and they caught a large number of fish; their nets, though, threatened to break. 7 And they gave a signal to their companions in the other boat that they should come and help them. They came and filled both boats so that they almost sank.

8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ feet and said: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord! 9 For fear had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish that they made; 10 likewise also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who worked together with Simon.

*Then Jesus said to Simon: Do not fear! From now on you will catch human beings.
11 And they brought their boats to the shore, left everything, and followed him.*

To be noticed first is the position of Luke 5:1–11 in the structure of the Gospel of Luke. While the calling of the disciples forms the first event of Jesus' public ministry, described in detail, in Mark (Mark 1:16–20), whereby it is emphasized that Jesus is accompanied by disciples from the very beginning, in Luke another ministry of Jesus, described in detail, precedes the calling of the first disciples. This ministry is distributed literarily over two Sabbaths. On a Sabbath in Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30) he appears as the proclaimer of the Good News. The Sabbath in Capernaum (Luke 4:31–43) is marked by the first miracles of healing that occur through him. The second healing miracle discussed in detail is that of Simon Peter's mother-in-law. Peter, thus, already has encountered Jesus and has experienced his ministry. Jesus is not an unknown person, at least not to Peter.

The calling narrative in Luke reveals a striking difference in comparison with that in Mark. In Mark 1:16–20 (similar is Matt 4:18–22) Jesus seizes the initiative by calling the two pairs of brothers into his discipleship from out of their everyday situation. In Luke 5:1–11 the initiative for entering Jesus' discipleship comes from Simon Peter and his companions themselves. Only in Luke the calling of the disciples occurs in connection with a wonderful catch of fish.

Luke 5:1–3 – A scene describing Jesus' teaching activity is sketched out in a few words only. This scene forms the background for the calling of the disciples described in more detail and already indicates its purpose (collaboration in the work of the proclamation of the word). The reference to the fact that the crowd "presses" Jesus (cf. Mark 3:9; 4:1) indicates how intensive the desire is to hear "the word (*logos*) of God."⁵ This has – so we may assume – the message of the Kingdom of God as its content. The mention of the fact that Jesus sees two boats lying on the shore and the fishermen who are in the process of washing their nets (Luke 5:2) is a narrative technique that is a preparation for the following event.

When it is said next that Jesus gets into the boat that belongs to Simon and asks him to put out a bit from the shore (Luke 5:3), the narrative leaves unanswered the question whether Simon, too, is in the boat while Jesus teaches the people from it. Similarly, it remains undetermined in the portrayal of the subsequent miracle (Luke 5:4–9) whether Jesus is in the same boat or not. The introductory scene is perhaps so succinctly described, so that what follows can be given all the more weight. An important theme for the further course of the narrative becomes discernible: the hunger of the people for the word of God. This lets us understand why Jesus needs fellow workers.

5 On the expression "the word of God", see also Luke 8:11, 21; 11:28, as well as Acts 4:31; 6:2, 7; 11:1; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 44, 46, 48, 49 passim. The word of God is communicated further through the missionary activity of the apostles.

Luke 5:4–7 – This section shows the efficacy and reliability of Jesus’ word. The crowd of people now recedes completely into the background. The interest of the reader is directed to the dialogue between Jesus and Simon as well as to the wonderful catch of fish in its size and abundance. The dialogue consists only in Jesus’ request to put out further and to cast out the nets for a catch (Luke 5:4) as well as in the answer from Simon: “Master, we have worked the whole night long and have caught nothing. But, at your word, I will cast out the nets” (Luke 5:5). Simon’s answer contains (a) an objection (as an experienced fisherman, he knows that, after a futile nocturnal effort, fishing during the day is pointless) and (b) an expression of trust (“at your word” [*rhēma*]).

According to the composition of the Gospel of Luke Simon has had an earlier contact with Jesus and has experienced the efficacy of his word (Luke 4:38–39 – the healing of his mother-in-law).

The expression “at your word” arouses associations with Mary’s answer to the angel at the Annunciation: “May it be done to me according to your word (*rhēma*)” (Luke 1:38). Like Mary, Simon also shows in an exemplary way what faith means: to get involved based on an authoritative word (cf. also Luke 8:11, 21; 11:28).

The miracle (Luke 5:6–7) is described in great detail (large amount of fish; the nets begin to break; help is needed; two boats are filled up; they are in danger of sinking) and in this way demonstrates what efficacy is ascribed to Jesus’ word.

Luke 5:8–10a – Simon has a presentiment of Jesus’ divine majesty. His reaction, which is shown in the fact that he falls at Jesus’ feet, confesses his sinfulness, and is seized by “fear”, is shaped in a manner similar to that in the Old Testament when people experience an encounter with God (cf. Isa 6:5). Simon and his companions have experienced the presence of God in the speech and action of Jesus during the wonderful catch of fish.

Luke 5:10b – Jesus’ answer to Simon’s reaction does not contain a command (“you should”), but rather a promise (“you will”). The expression “to catch human beings” or, translated more exactly, “to catch living human beings” differs from the expression “fishers of human beings” that is used in the report of the calling of the first disciples in the Gospel of Mark (Mark 1:17) and carries a positive connotation.

The verb “catch alive” (*zōgreō*) also means “to let live” (so in its usage in the Septuagint). The ideas of salvation from certain demise, of the saving of life, and of (re-)vitalization resonate here.

Said in terms of a modern comparison: Simon Peter will be like someone who steers a lifeboat or a rescue vehicle, or who is active in mountain rescue, or who participates in an emergency operation. Just like one who for the duration of a mission in the service of the saving of life must put everything else aside, so Peter in the service of the Good News of Jesus, which is urgent and through which the saving and healing love of God is to be brought to the suffering

people, will put everything aside – his profession, his family, human commitments, even his life. The concluding sentence already speaks of this.

Luke 5:11 – Jesus’ teaching activity, the wonder of the catch of fish brought about by him, as well as his promise motivate Simon Peter and his companions to leave⁶ “everything” and to associate themselves with Jesus. For the first time we encounter here the verb that is characteristic for discipleship and is later frequently used: “to follow” (*akoloutheō*), which contains the notion: to go along behind someone. In the further course of the Gospel of Luke it becomes clearer that the disciples go along behind the one who has come “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10) and that they are destined to continue this mission of Jesus.

4. Women in the Discipleship of Jesus

The reports of the Passion in the synoptic gospels show us that, from the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, women, too, follow Jesus. They are present at the Crucifixion of Jesus and do not leave him in the hour of his death. The masculine disciples forming the circle of the Twelve conduct themselves differently, as Mark and Matthew report. After the arrest of Jesus all of them leave him and flee (Mark 14:50; Matt 26:56). Those who “left” (*aphiēmi*) everything at their calling in order to follow Jesus (Mark 1:18, 20) now “leave” (*aphiēmi*) him to save themselves. All the synoptic gospels allude in a similar way to the presence of women at Jesus’ Crucifixion. But small differences also are displayed:

Mark 15:40–41 – “And also some women looked on from afar, among them Mary from Magdala, Mary the mother of James the Less, and Joses, as well as Salome; they had followed (*akoloutheō*) Jesus already in Galilee and had served (*diakoneō*) him. Still many other women were there who had come up with him to Jerusalem.”

Matt 27:55–56 – “Many women also were there and looked on from afar; they had followed (*akoloutheō*) Jesus from Galilee and had served (*diakoneō*) him. Among them were Mary from Magdala, Mary the mother of James and of Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.”

Luke 23:49 – “But all his acquaintances stood at a distance, as well as also the women who had followed (*synakoloutheō*) him from Galilee and who looked upon this with the others.” The fact that women serve (*diakoneō*) Jesus and the disciples, was already mentioned earlier (Luke 8:3).

6 More than Mark, Luke emphasizes the necessity of leaving and letting go: Luke 14:33 (renunciation of property); 9:60, 62; 14:26; 18:28–29 (putting aside human commitments); 9:23; 14:27 (self-denial up to the willingness to suffer). What is meant is not denigration of property, human commitments, or one’s own life, but rather Jesus’ message is so urgent that it justifies letting go of everything else.

The relationship of women to Jesus is also described with the significant verb “to follow”. And what Jesus expects from his masculine disciples, namely, that they “serve” (*diakoneō*, cf. Mark 9:35; 10:43–45; Matt 20:26–28; Luke 22:26–27) according to his example, is what the women practice from the very beginning.

The women are present not only at the Crucifixion of Jesus but also at his entombment and thus know where his tomb is to be found (Mark 15:47; Matt 27:61; Luke 23:55). At the empty tomb women are the recipients of the Easter message. Luke emphasizes here that they already were with Jesus in Galilee. The angels at the tomb say to the women: “Remember what he said to you when he was still in Galilee” (Luke 24:6).

Women, who had followed Jesus from the very beginning and to whom, first of all, Mary from Magdala belongs (cf. also Luke 24:10), are able to witness to the fact of Jesus’ death. They know where his grave is to be found and they become the messengers of Easter for the masculine disciples. They contribute to the fact that these latter find their way back to the discipleship of Jesus.

Even if the fact that women, too, follow Jesus from the very beginning is recalled for the first time in the reports about the Passion, then this fact is very much worth noting when one thinks about the role of women in the church today.