

History is full of charismatic personalities with ‘instant appeal’ – for good or for bad. Perhaps it is simply a matter of mirror neurons – a deeply ingrained facility in us which encourages imitative behaviour – an ‘inner principle’ which guides us for better or for worse. So we need to be very careful who we follow and why, or we may end up with mere ‘entertainers’ as our leaders, those artful people who know exactly how to engage our mirror neurons. A crucified Christ is a helpful reminder that Christ is not setting out to entertain us and is appealing to an inner principle that lies deeper than any immediate claims to success. When he calls his first disciples it is to this deeper sense of self that he appeals. He speaks and they follow or, in the words of the Dominican Herbert McCabe,

All talk is some kind of self-expression; to preach is to communicate yourself at that deepest level in ourselves in which, as St. Thomas says, we find God.

(p. 260. *God Matters*)

What is being communicated between Jesus and his disciples is God; or again, as Herbert McCabe puts it

God begins to be seen as a certain kind of exchange between (people)

(p. 174)

Jesus has no need for artifice here, for this is God speaking to God – that image of God within us that, as St. Paul carefully delineates, means the Word we speak is the Word that has already made its home in us.

Br John Mayhead
Monastery of Christ Our Saviour