

***Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Belchertown, MA
January 14, 2018***



Scripture Readings: 1 Samuel 3:3b – 10, 19 ✕ Psalm 40 ✕ 1 Corinthians 6 13c-15a, 17-20 ✕ John 1:35-42

Most people have seen the classic film, "Gone With the Wind." It's interesting how Director David Selznick chose the leading lady. At the time, everyone knew that no one but Clark Gable could play the character of Rhett Butler, but they weren't quite sure who should play the role of Scarlett O'Hara. Selznick considered a few dozen actresses to perform the Southern belle. Finally, he made a surprising selection: not a woman born in the South or even in the United States; Vivian Leigh was born in India of British parents. Almost everyone agrees that she played a superb, unforgettable Scarlett O'Hara.

Selznick took great care in choosing just the right person for that famous role. Similarly - but with much greater care - God selects us for a part in the divine production. We see it today in the call of the prophet, Samuel. When he was a boy, sleeping near the ark in the temple, Samuel heard a voice. He went to the priest, Eli, and said, "Here I am." But Eli said, "I did not call you, my son, go back to sleep." This happened two more times and finally Eli told the boy that if he heard the voice again, say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening." Of all the children in Israel, God had selected Samuel for a vital role.

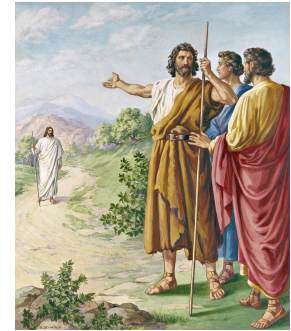
Samuel didn't have an easy time of it. Scripture tells us that he faced enormous struggles. But God had chosen him and Samuel never wavered.

God continues to call people today - sometimes in very unlikely circumstances.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, an Italian boy heard God's call. He was an unlikely choice because his father was quite anti-Catholic. A member of the Italian

Socialist Party, he constantly mocked the Church. His son, Albino, heard a Franciscan preacher and felt himself called to the priesthood. Albino's dad was working in another city so -

with great trepidation - he wrote him a letter. It took some time for the response. Trembling, Albino opened the letter. It contained a small piece of paper, on which his father wrote, "If that is what you wish, do it."



Eventually his dad was reconciled with the Church. Albino kept the note all his life - and he still had it in 1978, when as Bishop of Venice, he was called to serve the Church in a new way. He became known as "the smiling pope," Pope John Paul I. His papacy lasted only thirty-three days, but it made a deep impression. Today Albino Luciani — the late Pope John Paul I — is on the path to beatification and sainthood.

God not only chooses famous people like Pope John Paul I or Samuel; He chooses people like you and me. And what appears to be a humble role might be a hinge on his plan of redemption. In God's production, we do not know who the leading actors are, but we will find out on the final Judgment Day. What we do know is that God chooses us with care for our role in His plan. Like a great director, selecting exactly the right person for a part, God chooses you and me.

Today Jesus asks, "What are you looking for?" Do not be afraid to tell him. And you may hear those beautiful words, "Come, and you will see." ✕