

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
January 17, 2021 B

Facilitator: *Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask him to help us to hear the Word he wants us to hear this week.*

Pause for a moment and then play a religious song.

Opening prayer: *Good and gracious God, thank you for gathering us together to share life and listen to your holy Word. Today you show us how you call out to us in the events and encounters of daily life. May we discern your call to us and respond with generosity and obedience. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Response to last week's Word: [Facilitator briefly recalls last week's Gospel.] *Let us spend a few minutes sharing how the Word we heard God speak to us last week has unfolded in our lives during the week.*

Facilitator reads focus statement: The First Reading is the call of Samuel. In the Second Reading, Paul speaks about the sacredness of the body, calling it a temple of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel, John the Baptist introduces two of his disciples to Jesus.

Let us listen to God's Word to hear what it is he wants to say to us in these readings today. As you hear a word, you may want to underline it or write it down to remember.

Read the First Reading, the Psalm, and the Second Reading, pausing briefly after each one.

FIRST READING: 1Samuel 3:3b-10, 19

Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was.

The LORD called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am."

Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me."

"I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to sleep."

So he went back to sleep.

Again the LORD called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli.

"Here I am," he said. "You called me."

But Eli answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep."

At that time Samuel was not familiar with the LORD, because the LORD had not revealed anything to him as yet.

The LORD called Samuel again, for the third time.
Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me."
Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth.
So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply,
Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."
When Samuel went to sleep in his place,
the LORD came and revealed his presence,
calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!"
Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Samuel grew up, and the LORD was with him,
not permitting any word of his to be without effect.

COMMENTARY

In this beautiful call-response story, Patricia Sanchez notes *six* dimensions of the call-response dynamic. *First*, Samuel does not recognize God's call, which illustrates the fact that calls from God are not always immediately discernible. *Second*, the repetitiveness of God's calling assures us that God does not easily quit on us. He keeps calling. *Third*, the setting of God's call to Samuel (at night while he sleeps in the temple sacristy) reminds us that God's call to us can come at any time or place or during any human activity. *Fourth*, the fact that Samuel resorts to his mentor Eli for help suggests that we often may need help from other experienced pilgrims to discern God's call. *Fifth*, the description of Samuel's growing to maturity in the presence of God underscores the power of grace to sustain whoever responds to God's call. *Sixth*, the effectiveness of Samuel's ministry (whereby the Lord does not allow any word of his to be without effect [v.19]) reassures those called that active cooperation with God can yield astounding results.

(Used with permission, *The Word We Celebrate: Commentary on the Sunday Lectionary Years A, B, C*, by Patricia Sanchez, - Sheed & Ward publisher, 9-1-89.)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 40

R. (8a and 9a) Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.
I have waited, waited for the LORD,
and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.
And he put a new song into my mouth,
a hymn to our God.

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.
Sacrifice or offering you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;

then said I, "Behold I come."

R. Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,
to do your will, O my God, is my delight,
and your law is within my heart!"

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;

I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

COMMENTARY

The response of the true disciple is an unqualified acceptance of God's will: "*Here I am, Lord. I come to do your will.*"

SECOND READING: 1Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20

Brothers and sisters:

The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord,
and the Lord is for the body;

God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one Spirit with him.

Avoid immorality.

Every other sin a person commits is outside the body,
but the immoral person sins against his own body.

Do you not know that your body

is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,

whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

For you have been purchased at a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body.

COMMENTARY

During the first five Sundays of Ordinary Time, the Second Reading is from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. In his letter, Paul addresses the question of how to live as faithful disciples in a pagan world. Sexual promiscuity is one of the problems Paul encounters in the port town of Corinth. Some Corinthian Christians believe that their bodies, like all mortal things, will pass away and they can therefore do anything they want, e.g., engaging in unrestrained eating, drinking, sexual activity, etc. Paul thinks otherwise. He uses a striking parallel, reminding them that in baptism, our body (and spirit) is given to Christ; hence, it belongs to Christ. Because our body belongs to Christ, it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. For

that reason, it is wrong and sinful for anyone bound by Christian marriage to give his/her body to another outside that sacred bond – which mirrors Christ’s love for his Church.

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL: John 1:35-42

As we listen to this first reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our minds for the content.

**A participant reads the Gospel,
then all pause to reflect.**

As we listen to this second reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us. Be aware of what draws us in and what part of the Gospel might be a challenge to embrace. You may want to underline or write down the word you hear.

GOSPEL: John 1:35-42

John was standing with two of his disciples,
and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said,
“Behold, the Lamb of God.”
The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus.
Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them,
“What are you looking for?”
They said to him, “Rabbi” — which translated means Teacher —,
“where are you staying?”
He said to them, “Come, and you will see.”
So they went and saw where Jesus was staying,
and they stayed with him that day.
It was about four in the afternoon.
Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter,
was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus.
He first found his own brother Simon and told him,
“We have found the Messiah” — which is translated Christ —.
Then he brought him to Jesus.
Jesus looked at him and said,
“You are Simon the son of John;
you will be called Cephas” — which is translated Peter.

COMMENTARY

Just as Eli introduced Samuel to the Lord, John the Baptist, in this Gospel, introduces two of his disciples to Jesus (which underlines John's subordinate role). John's ministry is (as is ours) to introduce others to Christ. When the two disciples begin to follow Jesus, he asks them: "*What are you looking for?*"—or, simply put, "What does your heart seek?" They answer with a question of their own: "*Rabbi, where do you live?*" Jesus replies: "*Come and see.*" So they go off to have a long chat (a mini-retreat) with Jesus. During their "stay" with him, the eyes of the two disciples are opened to his true identity. "*Seeing*" and "*staying*" are key terms in John's Gospel. The one whose eyes are opened to who Jesus truly is, is invited to come and *stay* with Jesus, to come and share Jesus' relationship with his Father. It is an introduction into a life of discipleship, which leads one into "*staying*" with the Blessed Trinity.

Having had their eyes opened, one of the two disciples, Andrew, seeks out his brother, Simon, and introduces him to Jesus. Jesus immediately changes Simon's name to *Cephas*, meaning "rock." Henceforth, Peter will have a key and central role in the new community of believers.

FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Share with the group or person next to you what spoke to you most in the Gospel. With this first question, try to refrain from commenting on what others said. Just share what spoke to you and then move on to the next person.
2. Eli helped Samuel to recognize the call of God. Who in your life has helped you hear or listen to God?
3. When did following Jesus become important in your life? Can you recall an event or series of events that led to a deeper following of Jesus?
4. What would you answer if Jesus turned to you and asked: *What are you looking for?*
5. Paul speaks of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit. What are ways that the human body is desecrated today? What can help us to have a proper respect for the body—neither desecrating it or idolizing it?
6. Name one thing today's Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed and act on.

JOURNALING

Having listened to God's Word and listened to others' reflections on it, take a quiet moment to reflect on what you are hearing God say to you. Your response will be what you bring to Eucharist on Sunday, asking Jesus to help you respond as he asks of you. When ready, jot down your reflections.

PRAYING WITH THE WORD

Facilitator: Let us now pause to see how something(s) said in the reading might lead us into shared prayer. Suggestion: *God, you can come to me anytime and anywhere. Help me to grow in my ability to hear your voice, your Word.*

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Share with the person next to you one way you can act on this week's readings. Suggestion: Be aware of God's daily call in the events of daily life and try to respond generously to his call.

CONCLUDING PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, PETITION AND INTERCESSION

Facilitator: What are we grateful for? For what and for whom do we need to pray?

CLOSING PRAYER (Together)

*Inviting God,
You have called us to follow your son, Jesus Christ, and to live as temples of
your Holy Spirit.
Help us to hear the voice of Jesus today,
reflect upon it,
and then give us the courage
to act upon what we hear.
Amen.*