

## **Second Sunday In Ordinary Time (The Call Of The Lord)**

(1 Sam 3:3b-10, 19/ 1 Cor 6:13-15, 17-20/ Jn 1:35-42)

Today's readings of this second Sunday of Ordinary Time talk all about responding to the call of the Lord. The call of the Lord is different from one individual to another. The first reading describes the young Samuel was called by God to serve him. Let us first retrace the background of the story of Samuel's life.

It's about Samuel who lived a little more than 1000 years before Christ. Samuel was the son of Hannah and Elkanah in their old age. He was person of major importance in the Old Testament. He was a great prophet, he anointed King Saul as Israel's first king, and later he anointed David to be king. Samuel had an unbelievable influence over the religious and political climate of his day. At the beginning of the book of Samuel, we are told that his mother, Hannah, was unable to have children and she suffered bitterly over the fact she was barren. She promised God if she had a son she would dedicate him to God, which is what she did. When Samuel was still a child, Hanna brought him to the High Priest, Eli. Under Eli, Samuel would be raised and educated for God's service in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was. This is the background to our first reading.

The story of God calling young Samuel by name is almost magical. Through this story, we learn a great deal about the importance of listening. Young Samuel was serving in the sanctuary of the Lord. During the night he heard a voice as he slept in the temple of the Lord. There was a wonderful picture of the boy lying asleep in the dark, behind the sanctuary, where only one light remains glowing. He's awakened three times by a mysterious voice calling him by name. Samuel did not realize that it was God. He thought it was the priest, Eli, who was calling him; Three times Samuel went to Eli to found out what he wanted. We are told that at this time Samuel had "no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not been revealed to him" (1 Sam 3:7). That is the reason why Samuel went to Eli in order to verify if he was calling him. It was later Eli realized that the voice Samuel was hearing was the voice of God who was calling Samuel. And Eli directed Samuel how to reply to God. Finally when called the fourth time, God was revealed to Samuel. His response was to say: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." Young Samuel listened and responded to God's voice with the pure obedience of the child. By doing so, the Lord accompanied Samuel giving him insight, wisdom, and strength as one of his prophets. Samuel answered his calling from God. As he grew up under God's protection, the Lord was with him and let none of his Words fall to the ground. This means that as Samuel learned the Words of God, either directly from God speaking to him, or from inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and also from the teachings of Eli. Samuel answered God's calling by persevering in His living faith to the best of his ability.

Samuel's life would never be the same when he responded to God who spoke to him. His life changed and so were the lives of all God's people for hundreds of years thereafter, especially since Samuel was the person who established the monarchy and anointed Israel's first two kings. The life of Samuel is a living example to each and everyone of us. As Samuel grew in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord, we too are called to grow in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord. For it is through spiritual growth that we are sanctified in Christ.

Today's gospel reading is John's account of the call of the first disciples of Jesus. The gospel says that when John the Baptist saw Jesus walking by, he told two of his disciples that Jesus was the Lamb of God. John the Baptist's use of the messianic title, '*Lamb of God*', shows that he identifies Jesus as the Messiah and is prepared to let his own disciples follow Jesus. Andrew and another disciple heard John the Baptist point out Jesus and they responded to Jesus' call to "come and see." Later Andrew went to tell his brother Simon who, in turn, followed Jesus. In the end, Jesus gave a new name to Simon who was called Peter. What we learn from these readings are about the mystery of God's call. This mystery we cannot explain about God's plan for the people he has loved and chosen for them. We learned about the way that God called Samuel to do his work and the way that Samuel answered. We learned about the way that Jesus called his first disciples and the way that they answered.

One thing I think is worth noting. Samuel got guidance from Eli in recognizing God's voice. The disciples first received guidance from John the Baptist in recognizing Jesus. At times we think maybe God is saying something to us but we are not sure. It doesn't have to be saying something to us but we are not sure. It doesn't have to be some big thing like going into religious life. It can be something as simple as volunteering for some kind of service to others or praying a little more. We think, "Is this really what God wants?" It's helpful to get some guidance from a person whom we feel we can trust, who is wise and whom we consider as living a good Christian life. Usually God does speak and reach us through others. But we must first listen and pay attention to what he is saying to us. Obviously, we see that God speaks to us all through the Bible. We see that in the sacraments. God touches us and speak to us through others and in our daily experiences. These words serve as a template for all who seek to discern God's calling in their lives. We pray that Lord helps us to be always attentive listeners to his Word, to cherish it, taking time to deepen our relationship with him, and to lead others to God by the example of our lives.

Brothers and Sisters,

As we come together for the Eucharistic celebration, Christ is with us in each other. Saint Paul just reminded us of this in our second reading, our bodies are members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit, Christ is also with us in our prayers and song, in the Scriptures and in Holy Communion. His eternal call to us is to holiness, which we attain to an ever-greater degree as we come to know him and love him. Life is full of God's voice. As a father, he speaks to and calls us to his service every day. Like Samuel, we must always be ready to say: "*Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.*"