

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – January 14, 2018 – Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 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.

Psalm: Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

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 am I, 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.

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 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.

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 Kephas"-which is translated Peter.



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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the gospel be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

We now begin what the Church calls “Ordinary Time.” Christmas season is over, and we begin to see Jesus at work. We begin with a significant story, found in the First Reading for Sunday. A young man named Samuel is sleeping in the temple, as he was allowed to do. He wakes up instantly when he hears his name spoken out loud. He cries out, “Here I am!” and runs to his master, Eli, who is sleeping in another place in the temple. “You called me, what do you want?” “I didn’t call you,” Eli rasps. “Go back to sleep.” But the same thing happened again. Samuel runs to Eli, with the same result. On the third time, the old man at last understands. Wisely, he says “Samuel if this happens again, say these words: ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’” So Samuel goes back to sleep. He hears his name called again, “Samuel, Samuel!” Following instructions he says, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening!” God speaks, and Samuel grows up accompanied by the Lord’s presence.

Another naming is represented in the Gospel. John the Baptist points to Jesus, who is waiting for two particular men to notice him and get interested. They start to follow and Jesus says bluntly, “What are you looking for?” There are several layers to this question. The plain meaning is, “What’s up? Why are you following me?” But the depth charge is there too, the same one that finally shook Samuel loose: “Are you seeking God? Is that your hunger? Is there something about me that answers the deep desire of your heart?” They stammer some kind of reply. “Well, uh, well, um, where, where are you staying?” Jesus replies as he does to you and me: “*Come and see.*” They do go and see, spending the day with him. One of them, Andrew, runs to get his brother Simon, shouting, “we have found the Messiah!” They run back to Jesus and the most important event in Simon’s life takes place: Jesus gives him the name *Cephas*, a new deep identity for him. The word *Cephas*’ base meaning is “the rock.” Jesus must have seen innermost stability in him.

Peter could never have become fully himself if someone had not called his name all the way to its depths. The same goes for Samuel. God can call any of us by a name that reaches all the way down into our souls, to a place that we do not even know about! Our job is hear and to grow. Must it always be God or Jesus who calls our name in order for us to become ourselves? Couldn’t a psychologist do it, or a spouse, or a dear friend who believes in us? Yes, of course, each of these know us and beckon us to be ourselves. But only God can know our very deepest desires, and only God can satisfy the desire that is most precious of all in us: the reaching out for a person we want most and for whose sake we love others: God. Do you sense in your insides a kind voice whispering such an invitation, calling you by your real name, calling you to be a partner of the Christ of God?

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. Does God always call at the perfect time? Is there sometimes confusion in your life when God calls? It took Samuel three times to get it. Do you always recognize God’s call right away? Explain.
2. Do you always call on the Holy Spirit for guidance when you need it? Do you get such guidance? Explain. Do you receive some peace along with the guidance? Do you think the Holy Spirit enjoys being called upon for help?
3. Jesus asked the disciples, “What are you looking for?” How would you answer that question? Then there was a second loaded question: “Where are you staying?” This could be restated, “Where can we spend time with you?” When the disciples took time with Jesus, did they find what they were looking for, even if just by instinct? Will this work for you?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations. The following are secondary suggestions:

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another’s openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

Almighty ever-living God, who governs all things, both in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the pleading of your people and bestow your peace on our times. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.