

2nd Sunday OT - Jn 1:35-42, 1 Sam 3:3-10, 19, 1 Cor 6:13-15, 17-20

"Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

What a great gospel to start off the New Year! ***This passage*** from the book of Samuel is a constant reminder that if we want to hear the Lord, we have to listen. In other words, we have to be quiet, not even speaking or praying any words that can distract us. If we already have the dialogue worked out what the Lord is going to say to us, then we will never hear what the Lord really wants to tell us.

That is why it is good to have a ***Spiritual Guide***, someone with experience to help us along the way. However, since Spiritual Guides are rare and hard to find, even a Prayer Partner is better than no one. The Lord can and will call us at any age. "At that time Samuel was not familiar with the Lord." If we don't practice our faith and read our Scripture than we are unfamiliar with the Lord! There is a difference between just listening to Scripture being read at mass each week and actively reading our Bible with commentary.

How does a person come to be ***a disciple of Jesus***? Usually, through the witness of another: Andrew and his friend came through the Baptist, Simon through Andrew. Sometimes, as with Philip (and Samuel), the call can be direct. The one called is to stay with Jesus, abide with him. This experience teaches more about Jesus. The two called first, addressed Jesus as Rabbi, but, thanks to his stay with Jesus, Andrew told his brother Simon that he had found not some rabbi, but ***the Messiah***.

Jesus asked the question addressed to every reader of the gospel, "What are you looking for?" They replied, perhaps surprised by the question, "Where do you live?" They were invited to ***Come and see***. They spent the day with Jesus. Here, the evangelist is playing with words. The word translated, "stay," "abide," "live," "spend the day," is a single word in the Greek. The disciples thought they asked Jesus where he lived in the ordinary sense. John the Evangelist knows that ***God lives in Jesus***, that the two of them, Father and Son, live in the believer, and that the perfection of the believer is to live, abide, dwell in the Father and the Son.

This sense of the ***Trinity living within us*** is expressed by Saint Paul in today's letter to the Corinthians, and also in John chapter 14, verse 23, "And the Father and I will come and make our dwelling within him." This passage is a follow up to Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well in chapter 4:21-24, but

especially where it reads, "...the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth...that is the kind of worshiper the Father wants."

This is important for our calling like Samuel by the Lord. Jesus isn't calling us to a building but to the ***faith community*** within the building. Jesus isn't just calling us to a particular liturgical style but to a living and practicing faith community. There is no one way of worshiping God as a follower of Christ. Our Greek and Russian Orthodox brothers' and sisters' liturgy is just as legitimate as ours, and there are many others besides them. Yes, even the Tridentine Rite.

However, God is also calling us, like Samuel, ***by name***. Jesus is calling us, like the disciples, by name, to a personal relationship with him that is supported and will grow within a faith community. I stress this because many believers think that they are called to a specific building or style of building or to a specific liturgy or style of liturgy. I have been getting strange letters over several years since I have been here at St. Francis de Sales talking strange talk about our worship space, even our altar, of being an abomination. I guess he is hoping his letters will encourage us to turn back the clock to pre Vatican II style liturgy.

Let me sum up today's gospel reading of our continued vocation calling to a deeper personal relationship with the Lord. This is a quote from the Jesuit Pedro Arrupe:

"Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything. When we fall in love with God, then we can truly say, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." And, "Here I am Lord, I come to do your will."