

## Homily

Second Sunday of Ordinary Time - January 17, 2021

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Today we celebrate the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time. You might well ask: what happened to the First Sunday of Ordinary Time? Well Ordinary Time begins after Evening Prayer on the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord. So, there really *is* no First Sunday of Ordinary Time so, perhaps more accurately, we are Celebrating the Sunday of the Second **Week** of Ordinary Time.

Now, one might think that Ordinary Time might refer to a time of lesser importance. **Not so!** During Ordinary Time, we meditate on the things that happened during the course of Jesus' public ministry. And they were *far* from ordinary and ... all of our readings **today** ... carry the message of **listening** to the call of the Lord ... and then **heeding** His call!

Leading up to our first reading, Samuel had been a much-loved gift from the Lord. His mother, Hannah was barren ... and had prayed ceaselessly to the Lord for a child. She had been so grateful that when she finally gave birth to a son that she dedicated the boy to the Lord so ... when he was still quite young, she presented the boy to be trained by the High Priest, Eli.

So, when he heard a voice summon him in the night he assumed, at first, that it was his mentor calling. When ... with Eli's help ... he finally realized that it was the voice of the Lord ... he responded: "Speak, for your servant is listening." Samuel would go on to become the last of the great judges of Israel. He would anoint Saul and ... in his turn, David ... ushering in the age of "Kings".

In our Second Reading we hear St. Paul cautioning the Corinthians. One might well think of Corinth as Sin City. Sexual immorality was the normal way of life in the ancient pagan world. The ancient pagan gods certainly had no problems with it. Corinth took immorality way beyond that of most cities. The new Christians were subjected to temptations we cannot even imagine. Paul tells them that their bodies belong to the Lord ... that they are in fact temples of the Holy Spirit. Therefore ... they must not surrender their bodies to the temptations of the world ... a message for us today as much as for the Corinthians of Paul's time.

Our Gospel gives us St. John's version of the call of the first apostles ... somewhat different than what is presented in the Synoptic Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke where Jesus invites four fishermen to follow him and promises to make them fishers of Men. But St. John tells us that the first disciples of Jesus were **originally** disciples of John the Baptist. John ...knowing his work of preparing the way was now complete ... makes it clear that the disciples of John should now become the disciples of Jesus ... the "Lamb of God". We hear no more about John until we are told of his cruel death at the hands of Herod.

The two disciples immediately leave him and begin to follow Christ. They ask Jesus where He is staying and He invites them to "Come and see." We are told that one of the disciples was Andrew and that he then brought his brother, Simon to Jesus. Upon meeting Simon Jesus would change his name to Cephas or Peter ... the **rock** on which Christ would build His Church!

We are not told who the second disciple was but many scholars believe and make a convincing case that it was St. John the Evangelist, himself ... who never referred to himself by name.

God also calls each of us. Do we hear His call? Do we **want** to hear His call? Do we perhaps not **want** to hear His call ... because we are afraid of what He might ask of us? Are we living a lifestyle of which He might not approve? Are we afraid He might ask of us something we don't want to do? Or when we pray ... do we pray: "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening" or do we perhaps pray: "Listen Lord, for your servant is speaking"? Sometimes when we think God is not answering our prayers ... could it be that we can't hear Him because we are too busy doing all the talking? True prayer demands that we take the time to just be present to God ... and listen!

One of my very favorite hymns echoes our Psalm response: "Here I am Lord; I come to do your will? What better prayer is there than that?"