

Homily of Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B, 2024

1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19; Psalm 40, 2, 4, 7-10; 1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20; John 1:35-42

The first reading tells us the story of the call of young Samuel. The second reading is a call to a life of holiness. The gospel reading is about the call of three disciples of Jesus. It is not a mere coincidence that the theme of our celebration and reflection, after the Christmas season, is God's invitation to us to discipleship. We received so much from the Advent and Christmas Seasons. Now, in the Ordinary Time of the Church's calendar and in the first month of the new year, is the time to put the graces we received into action.

In the first reading, we see that God did not give up calling Samuel until Samuel answered him. In the same way, God does not give up on us. He continues to send his Spirit to minister to our hearts. We pray for the grace to respond positively to God's call as Samuel did. Samuel, finally, replied, "Speak, for your servant is listening." The reading concludes, "Samuel grew up, and the Lord was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect." When we respond positively to God's call, the result is an intimate relationship with him. Then, we will grow in him, he will be with us, and our words and our actions will have positive effects.

Eli's patience is amazing! If my steward woke me up three times through the night asking whether I called him, I would be worried that he was hallucinating. Eli teaches us how to be patient during the times we have to go over and over issues we presumed had been resolved. We pray for parents, teachers, vocation directors, spiritual directors, formators, catechists, and pastors of souls that they have the patience, understanding, and wisdom their calling and responsibilities require.

The second reading calls us to a life of holiness. In the reading, St. Paul reminds us that our bodies are members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit purchased at a price, which is the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. The current sexual liberation whereby sexual appeal and pleasure are the targets gives little or no regard to moral righteousness. There is so much promotion of sexual appeal and pleasure in adverts, attires, songs, movies, videos, cartoons, books, media outlets, and so on. Even if the world seems to have become comfortable with some unspeakable sexual exhibitions and displays, for us believers, it must not be so. Do we avoid preaching against sexual sins so as not to make the hearers uncomfortable or so as not to offend the world? No. Jesus tells us that although we are in the world, we are not of the world (John 15:19; John 17:14-16). St. Paul writes, "proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient" (2 Timothy 4:2).

In today's gospel, John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God to Andrew and another disciple of his. The two left John and became disciples of Jesus. Later, Andrew "found his own brother, Simon, and told him, 'We have found the Messiah.'... Then he brought him to Jesus." John the Baptist and Andrew teach us to show Jesus to others and bring them to him. We do this by our words and actions.

I imagine that Simon must have, proudly, attributed what he became – the leader of the apostles and the first pope - to his brother, Andrew, who took him to Jesus. Is it not to God's glory if someone attributes his or her blessings to your help? There are instances where people deny help to those they could have helped because they do not want those people's progress or success.

Someone writes:

"A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.
When we give of ourselves, nothing is truly lost.
When one candle lights another, its light is not diminished.
In fact, the light given off together is greater than the light of one."

A candle diminishes and disappears as it burns. That is how our life is. Every day, we diminish like a burning candle. It is only a matter of time, we will disappear, and our light goes out. So, let us pass on our light and light up other human candles before we disappear and our light goes out.

To conclude, as God calls us to various vocations, responsibilities, and to repentance, many other voices from the world and the Evil One call us too. The voices from the world and the Evil One are usually voices of discouragement and distraction. We pray for the grace to hear God's call and the grace to respond like Samuel, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

When He calls me, I will answer,
When He calls me, I will answer,
When He calls me, I will answer;
I'll be somewhere list'ning for my name.

I'll be somewhere list'ning,
I'll be somewhere list'ning,
I'll be somewhere list'ning for my name.
Oh, I'll be somewhere list'ning,
I'll be somewhere list'ning,
I'll be somewhere list'ning for my name. (Song by Edurado J. Lango)

Fr. Martin Eke, MSP