

January 14, 2024

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

John 1:35-42

The next day John was there again 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 he 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 Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

Background:

John's gospel is different from Matthew, Mark, and Luke in a number of ways. For example, the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record that it is Jesus who first invites the disciples to become his followers (Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20, Luke 5:1-11). But here in this text it is John the Baptist who suggests that his disciples follow Jesus. Those disciples then recruit others to investigate the possibility that Jesus might be the long-awaited messiah. Jesus then changes the name of Simon to Cephas when he accepts him as a disciple. The other gospels record Jesus changing Simon's name to Peter after he has been a disciple for some time.

In the gospel text, John presents a pattern for how people come to Jesus.

1. a believer tells another of Jesus
2. a title is used
3. the person is led to Jesus
4. Jesus sees and confirms the person's decision
5. the conversion is sealed

Because John's gospel is believed to have been written about 100 AD or later, a similar pattern would have been true for everyone in John's community. None of them would have had a personal experience of Jesus as he taught in synagogues, preached to the crowds, taught his followers to pray, or argued with the religious leaders. No doubt some of the early Christians lamented not having had firsthand experience of being present when Jesus walked their roads and preached in their gathering places. Others might have even used it as an excuse for not being able to believe at all. For the early Christians to point to examples where the first disciples were led to Jesus by others would diminish the credibility of those kind of objections.

Reflection Questions:

1. Who would you list among your heroes?
2. In what ways have any of them shaped how you try to live your life?
3. To what extent do you know these women and men? Do you know any of them personally? Have you read how their life unfolded?
4. Who were the people who taught you about Jesus? Who are the people who taught you how to live as a disciple? Are they the same persons?
5. Do you ever wish that you had lived during the lifetime of Jesus?
6. Place yourself in this gospel. See yourself as one of John the Baptist's disciples who hear John the Baptist say "Behold, the Lamb of God." What happens within you as you hear this statement? How does the scene unfold in your mind's eye?
7. Can you talk to God about your desire to be welcomed into God's presence, or about the desire and the fear that arises within you from that kind of intimacy?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to fr.paul.gallagher.ofm@gmail.com.

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Excerpts from the readings for January 14, 2024, the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time

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."

Eli answered, "I did not call you. 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. 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.

Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will. I have waited for the Lord,

and he heard my cry. And he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God.

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." "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!"

I announced your justice in the vast assembly; I did not restrain my lips, as you, O Lord, know.

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. 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.

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.

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