

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

2nd Sunday

in Ordinary Time, B

January 17, 2021

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Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa
Pastor

For the time being, our Sunday Masses are held outdoors, by the Parish Hall, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:30 AM. Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing (6 ft. between people of different households).

1st 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm:

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

R.

2nd Reading:

1 Corinthians 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Lector: Alleluia, alleluia.

All: Alleluia, alleluia.

Lector: We have found the Messiah: Jesus Christ, who brings us truth and grace.

All: Alleluia, alleluia.

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."

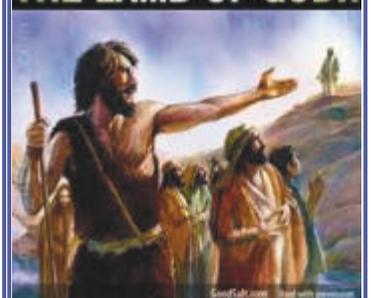
So they went and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

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 Cephas" which is translated Peter.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Acclamation: When we eat this **bread** and drink this **cup**, we proclaim your **death**, O Lord, until **you come again**.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!!



REFLECTING ON THE WORD GUIDEPOSTS

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE LORD

Today we hear the stories of people being called unexpectedly by the Lord. In the first reading, it takes a few times before Samuel realizes that God is calling him; he believes it's his mentor, Eli, who calls out to him while he sleeps. It is only after Eli instructs him to respond, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" that Samuel responds appropriately (1 Samuel 3:9). But once he does so, "the Lord was with him" (1 Samuel 3:19).

In the Gospel, Andrew also needs the testimony of a more knowledgeable person, in this case, John the Baptist. When John points out the stranger -- "Behold the Lamb of God", -- Andrew and another disciple hear him and immediately follow Jesus (John 1:36). Andrew in turn tells his brother, Simon Peter, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41).

The church year has moved into Ordinary Time now and it is appropriate that these invitations come on otherwise ordinary days. We are no longer at the manger, nor are we at the empty tomb. Neither Samuel nor Andrew witnessed a historic event. But their ordinary day (or night) turned momentous because of their encounters with the Lord.

Samuel's life was transformed when he responded to God. So too, were Andrew's, John's, and Simon Peter's when they decided to follow Jesus. By giving themselves over to the Lord, they are no longer living for themselves. Samuel refers to himself as the Lord's servant; Andrew has already gone out and found his brother, Simon Peter, and brought him to Jesus. Paul writes to the Christian community in Corinth, "Do you not know . . . that you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19). Samuel knows this and so do Jesus' disciples.

There is a false notion that "vocation" applies only or principally to priests and nuns. Rather, each one of us is called to follow the Lord. Other than the "long-term" vocations, that is, to the religious life or to the married life or to single blessedness, etc., every moment of our life must be an answer to the call to live Jesus' life, to make our life identical to his, or, in a more common parlance, to do God's will at every moment.

Thus, discernment is necessary to lead us to a discovery of our calling at every moment. It consists in contemplation to make ourselves genuinely open to God, asking God what he wants for us instead of deciding what we want for ourselves and then asking God to support our decision.

What might be God's call for you today? Can you recognize the call when it comes? Among other things, perhaps the Lord is calling you to a new friendship or relationship, or to be a peacemaker in a tension-filled situation. It could be that we don't recognize the call because we are too busy or content and not willing to listen or change.

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS A *PERSONAL* ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Do you suffer from "no-name-it is"? It's a disease that strikes churchgoers who after decades of attending Mass together can only recognize the faces of some fellow parishioners, but have no clue as to their names.

Worse yet is to get the name wrong. A fifth-grade boy thought Jesus' father's name was Virgil, or Verge for short. "Well, you know, they're always talking about Virge 'n' Mary."

In today's Gospel, the townspeople don't know who Jesus is, but, John the Baptist has both his name and his occupation. When Jesus arrives in Bethany, John declares: "Look, here comes the Lamb of God."

Happily, we know Jesus' name and his occupation. That's a start. Our real challenge is to get to know *him*. As outlined in the gospel of John:

At the beginning of his public life, after being introduced by John as the Lamb of God, when Jesus speaks, it is with a question: "*What are you looking for?*"

After his resurrection, when Jesus appears and speaks for the first time, it is also with a question, saying to Mary Magdalene: "*Who are you looking for?*" This time, the WHAT has changed to WHO.

In other words, to really know Jesus is to experience him. We can get drowned in the WHAT, that is, the many ideas, prayers, and other things we know about Jesus Christ, but it does not constitute faith until it leads us to a PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH HIM --- as the gospel of John outlines it, from "WHAT are you looking for?" to "WHO are you looking for?"

JOHN POINTED TO JESUS AND SAID, "BEHOLD, THE LAMB OF GOD." TWO DISCIPLES HEARD WHAT HE SAID AND FOLLOWED JESUS.

John's desire, and the reason he existed, was to see Christ exalted and glorified. Rather than be anxious that his followers were leaving him for Christ, John was glad. To emphasize where he stands in relation to Jesus, John would later say "He must increase, I must decrease" (John 3:30).

May the same desire and motivation be at the base of all our actions at home, at work, and in the community at large. In the particular context of St. Thomas Indian Mission, may our desire for the greater honor and glory of God motivate us to do more for our parish especially in terms of financial support and Mass attendance and participation.

A BACKGROUND TO TODAY'S FIRST READING

In today's first reading, Samuel is offered to us as an ideal to emulate. Samuel lived a little more than 1,000 years before Christ.

Samuel was a person of major importance in the Old Testament. He was a great prophet, he anointed King Saul as Israel's first king, and later he anointed David to be king. He had an unbelievable influence over the religious and political climate of his day and for many centuries thereafter.

At the beginning of the book of Samuel, we are told that his mother, Hannah, was unable to have children; she suffered bitterly over that fact. She constantly prayed for a son; she promised God if she had a son she would dedicate him to God's service. God heard her prayer.

When Samuel was still a young child, Hannah brought him to the High Priest, Eli. Eli cared for the Ark of the Covenant, and he raised Samuel to assist him in his service to God.

Just as he did when he came in dreams to Samuel, God reveals himself to us and offers an invitation to follow him. Our response allows God to bless us with his great power.

Today the voice of God comes to each one of us, inviting us to respond with the words of Samuel: "Speak, for your servant is listening." When there is no reply, or a "busy" signal, God will come again. God's patience is infinite.

A small girl kept sitting in her room with her eyes closed. After a while, her exasperated mother asked, "What are you doing, for God's sake?" The girl replied, "I don't know yet – but I'm asking God what I should do for his sake."



January 18, Monday: The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins (January 18–25).

In a time when the sad divisions that separate the Christian churches seem even stronger, let each one of us say a prayer for Christian unity every day during the coming week. Make your own prayer or you may use the following:

Eternal Father, we praise you for sending your Son to be one of us and to save us. Look upon your people with mercy, for we are divided in so many ways, and give us the Spirit of Jesus to make us one in love. We ask this gift, loving Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

CELEBRANT:

Our Lord assured his disciples that in him they would find what they were looking for. Looking for our needs to be fulfilled, we turn now to the Lord with our prayers.

LECTOR:

1) For the Church, that like Andrew, who stayed with the Lord and then invited his brother as well, we who have found our home in the Lord may go forth and bear witness to others, *let us pray to the Lord.*

2) For our leaders, who have responded to the call to serve others in public office, that they may work humbly and tirelessly to serve the common good, *let us pray to the Lord.*

3) That all our citizens may work to hasten the day when this country truly lives out the ideals for which Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought and gave his life, *let us pray to the Lord.*

4) That during the week of prayer for Christian unity, which begins tomorrow, all Christians may be inspired to find solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ, *let us pray to the Lord.*

5) For those who are struggling to hear the Lord's voice in their lives or understand the nature of their call, *let us pray to the Lord.*

6) For this community called by Christ to follow him and to serve one another, and for those among and beyond us needing to be served, loved and cared for, *let us pray to the Lord.*

CELEBRANT:

Loving God, help us to hear your call now and throughout our lives and heed that call to the best of our abilities. Grant this and all the prayers we make through your Son, in whose name we work toward perfect unity as one body of Christ Jesus our Lord.

PLEASE PRAY FOR . . .

- the Legal Protection of Unborn Children, as this Friday, January 22, is the anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision legalizing abortion.
- God's blessing of good health on Steven Goetz (for his recovery and rehab from car accident), Michael Gordon (for his recovery from surgery), Joseph Lechuga, Michael & Yvonne Schaaf (for their recovery from COVID-19), and Rose Gleason whose health has been declining.
- God's blessing of eternal life on +Vincent Michael Tiger, Sr., +Julio Somoza, Sr., +Francisco Felix, +Rachel Dominguez, and +Gail Inman.



COLLECTIONS FOR PARISH SUPPORT:

Via Mail & Mass: January 9-10, 2021: \$770

Via Online: Jan. 5, 2021 to Jan. 10, 2021: \$405

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