

Fr Tom's homily for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time 2021

First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:3-10,19
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:13-15,17-20
Gospel: John 1:35-42



As I sat and prayed over today's scripture readings, it was clear to me that the theme that jumped out was about vocation. Being called by God. But in today's world, there seems to be a sense that vocations are for other people. It is all about being a priest or a religious or some other holy thing. But that couldn't be further from the truth. Each of us here today have our own calling, as St John Henry Newman famously said, *God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.*

But for us to know the Lord's will, we have to hear and recognise his call, just as Samuel had to. In our doing that we must discern what is true and what is false. I'm not talking about fake news, but as Thomas Aquinas describes, that intrinsic desire for God. Each of us is called to an encounter with the Lord, but we need to be open to it.

Our gospel today gives us a great image of answering our vocation as Christians, and that is by giving us a model of discipleship in four phrases. So, let's just explore them.

Look, there is the lamb of God.

The disciples' reaction might seem strange in that they leave John behind and follow Jesus. But it isn't at all. Their immediate response was triggered by their heart. Being faithful Jews, they were aware of the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah. Proclaiming Jesus as the Lamb of God connected two articles of the Jewish faith, the coming of the Messiah and a lamb as the sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. This caused their immediate response because it fulfilled the ultimate desire of their heart. Their soul responded to this as true and good.

We already know that Jesus is our Saviour and through the Mercy of God, he offers us forgiveness of our sins. In hearing the wonderful phrase, "Behold the Lamb of God," whether during Mass or in reading the Gospel, it is a reminder to us and a refreshment to our soul that he is the fulfilment of the desire of our heart. We respond as they did, by turning toward Jesus and following Him as Christian disciples.

'What do you want?'

This question that Jesus asks the disciples is one that he already knows the answer to. But it is to help the disciples be aware that Jesus is the one that they are looking for, and that they want. In asking that question he is telling them to recognise their hearts desire. With this question Jesus connects the response of their heart to their consciousness. He is saying, "what is the situation you find yourself in now?" Consideration of their new situation begins their discipleship: to learn from the Master and to follow Him.

The Gospel reminds us that we are to make every effort to learn from Jesus through prayer and devotion, through the sacraments and further catechesis and adult formation. And the more we learn about Him and His promise of salvation, the more we want to follow Him in his mission in acclaiming salvation to others. We evangelize, not only by telling others about Christ in order that they might make a rational decision to become Christian or a better Christian, but to bring them to a closer relationship with Christ, through an awareness of Christ as the fulfilment of their heart's desire.

Come and See

In response to the question about where Jesus is living, he invites them to come and see. It is not about a house or residence, but it about getting to know all about Jesus. He is saying by following him "they will see." Their eyes will be opened to who He is and what His mission is. Although they may not have realized the essence of the question at that moment, soon after their brief time with Jesus ("they stayed with him the rest of that day."), they began "to see" what he is all about and what their role will become as his disciple.

We, as Christians, follow him and our role as disciples becomes clearer, we "come and see" along the way of our lives as Christians who He is and what our participation is in His mission.

We have found the Messiah.

The disciples' response isn't to tell people that they have met a new rabbi, but to proclaim that they have found the Messiah. In spending time with Jesus, they have recognised who and what he is, and it is not something that they can keep to themselves. They tell Simon that they have found what they are looking for.

When we have been told about Jesus, our discipleship has to move from the head to the heart, but then on to action. We are called to proclaim that Good News that Jesus gives us. Our life is one that needs to be one of sharing the love of God.

Each of us does that in our own way, as a parent, spouse, or any other relative. In this time, I am particularly struck by those who put themselves at risk as they follow their vocation as a medic or member of the emergency services. I have heard stories this week from people who even if they don't realise it are sharing that love of God and are true disciples of the Lord.

Through moving through those four stages of discipleship, we can say. "*Here I am Lord, I come to do your will*",

Fr James and Fr Tom wish you a blessed Sunday. Keep safe and well, and never hesitate to pick up the telephone and be in touch. See you in church I hope! Keep in close contact with the website for news of how practical plans are developing.