

Homily 2nd Sunday Year B 2021

Samuel shows us the importance of listening to God. Our challenge is to know when God is speaking to us. Listening is much more than hearing. Some people can talk and talk and talk. We can end up hearing them talk but not pay much attention even though we could give a good summary of what was said. Attention and interest are key elements to listening. Listening invites us to engage. It calls for an inner or active response. True listening will influence the way you live in the future. From an early age Samuel listened to God and he eventually became a great Judge and prophet who chose the first kings of Israel, Saul and David. Being true to his word, *"Here I am Lord, I come to do your will!"* Samuel offers a very good way to begin a reflection on scripture. Start with *"Speak Lord, your servant is listening"* and continue with *"Hear I am, Lord, I come to do your will!"*

The listening theme continues in John's gospel. The Baptist's disciples come to Jesus and ask *Where do you live?* Not a good translation. They are really asking Jesus, *"What are you about? What's your story?"* Rather than give them a long diatribe about his mission, who he was, who sent him, etc. Jesus invites them to *"Come and see!"* come and listen to me, not just to what I say but what I do; spend time with me. Jesus wanted them to make up their own minds. In John's gospel the disciples make up their minds very quickly but, in the other gospels, it is not until Pentecost that they fully recognise Jesus as the Messiah, the anointed one sent by God. With Samuel and the disciples, a longish period of listening is needed before becoming motivated and moving into action. Denis McBride calls Eli, John the Baptist, and Andrew *the Introducers*. People who introduce others to God, to Jesus. McBride then asks *Who introduced you to Jesus?* My parents were my introducers. I grew up around the Church, it was a source of prayer, of recreation, the place to go. Faith was an integral part of life, so integral it was as essential as the air we breathe; only in later life have I more fully appreciated this.

Mother Teresa: God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer.

Alfred Brendel: The word 'listen' contains the same letters as the word 'silent.'

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Just as our love for God begins with listening to God's Word, the beginning of love for other Christians is learning to listen to them.

Saint Augustine: Remember this. When people choose to withdraw far from a fire, the fire continues to give warmth, but they grow cold. When people choose to withdraw far from light, the light continues to be bright in itself but they are in darkness. This is also the case when people withdraw from God.

The elderly lady on her 110th birthday was asked. *"What do you think is the reason for your long life?"* "Oh," she replied, *"I suppose it's because I was born such a long time ago!"*

AND *"Don't worry about temptation -- as you grow older, it starts avoiding you!"*