

2nd Sunday (B)

- The 1st Reading must be the first recorded account of someone sleeping in the church; it was during this time that Samuel heard a voice calling him.
- Even though it's described as being a voice from outside himself, it may well have been deep within that he heard it.
- Voices can be very dangerous - people have done dreadful things while claiming that a voice - even the voice of God - had told them to do something.
- So the need for discernment - the young Samuel didn't know what to make of the voice, so he sought the wise guidance of the elderly judge, Eli who could lead him to make sense of the message.
- Samuel became attuned to the voice of God, but he first had to listen - to pay attention to what is going on, deep down within himself, beyond the facts & events of what he experienced.
- Samuel also needs someone who enables him to discern the meaning of his experiences & his responses to them - a spiritual guide - someone who teaches him to attune himself to the God who speaks to him in his experiences.
- He therefore, in time, becomes a prophet - the human voice of God & someone who hears God's message behind the experiences of his people.
- In the Gospel we have John's version of Jesus calling his first disciples.
- Here too, the invitation is personal.
- In both instances, the initiative is God's & he calls for a response.
- All of us receive calls from God.
- The question becomes: Do we recognize messages from God?
- Sometimes, like the disciples in the Gospel, we recognize Jesus & follow.
- Sometimes, we fill our minds & hearts with so much 'stuff' that we can't hear, let alone discern.
- We can, of course, block out the voice, & being quite sophisticated in our Western culture, we can use all forms of reasoning why we should deny that there is anything from God.
- We might also be afraid of what He is going to ask of us.
- He might demand something more than we want to do or give.
- Maybe, we'd rather deal with Him later.
- Maybe if we ignore the call enough, we won't have to deal with it at all.
- And that is the sad truth of our reaction to God's call.
- If we don't respond like Samuel in today's first reading, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening," we might miss our opportunity to do His will.
- God's calls have an impact on our lives as well as on the lives of people we might not even know.

- John Henry Cardinal Newman considered God's call to him in life & reflected on it with a beautiful prayer.
- He wrote this beautiful reflection: *"God has created me for some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have a mission. I may never know exactly what that mission is in this life. I shall be told it in the next. I have a part in a great work. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing. I shall do good. I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, even if I do not realize what I am doing. But, if I keep His commandments, I will serve Him in my calling."*
- What is your calling? What is my calling? The general answer to those questions is simple: we are called to serve God.
- The **particular** answer to that question is a mystery, the mystery of our lives & how we respond to each circumstance we encounter in our lives.
- Have you been able to discern during this time of pandemic what God is calling you to now & into the future?
- Just as surely as God called Samuel & as Jesus called the disciples, so too we are called - we pray today for the grace & courage to be attuned to God's call in our lives.
- But then there's the question of **how** we learn of what we are called to be & do.
- Jesus asks the would-be disciples a question – *What are you looking for? What do you want from me? Do you want to give your lives a new direction – the one I am taking?*
- They reply with questions – *Where are you staying? What is the secret of your life? What does life mean to you?*
- They don't want new doctrines but to learn of a new way of living life from Jesus. They want to live like him.
- And Jesus answers – *Come & see! Come & learn from me – don't get your ideas from others. Come & be with me & you will discover how I live, what I'm looking for in life & why I live as I do.*
- Many millions of people call themselves Christians, but they have not had real, personal contact with Jesus.
- They don't know how he lived; they don't know his plan for God's great project & they don't learn anything from him.
- How can we make the message of Jesus credible & life-giving in our own time for others – it will only be by knowing Jesus well.
- We pray for the courage to have an orientation to the Lord throughout our lives, so that when He calls we will respond, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

