

“Here I am, Lord; I have come to do your will.” [Psalm 40:8-9]

A. I SAMUEL 3:3-10,19-- The Context: This book covers the period 1083 to 1000 B.C., the beginning of the monarchy. The book's stories were pulled together at a much later time by the same deuteronomistic authors of the book of Judges. Samuel, the last judge, anointed Saul as king. [RG, 115] **Today's portion** recounts **God's call to Samuel in his sleep to be a prophet.** Such divine communications were unknown at the time, hence Samuel's confusion. [TCB 285, 286]

B. PSALM 40: 2,4,7-10 --The Context. This psalm describes God's rescue of the psalmist from a swampy underworld. And it stipulates **a precise mode of thanksgiving: not animal sacrifice, but open and enthusiastic proclamation of the salvation just experienced.** [TCB 673]

C. I CORINTHIANS 6:13-15,17,20 The Context: Paul wrote this letter in 56 A.D. to answer practical questions from the Corinthian community and to address moral disorders. [RG 406,409] **Today's text** addresses the Corinthian opinion that sexuality is a morally indifferent area. Paul explains **the mutual relationship between the Lord Jesus and our bodies** in a densely packed paragraph that contains elements of a profound theology of sexuality [TCB, 259]

D. JOHN 1:35-42--The Context: This book was written by a disciple of the Apostle, John as well as other writers. It was written between 90-100 A.D. John's Jesus is a noble and divine figure, Son of God and Word of God. He is peaceful, powerful and in full charge of his destiny. [RG 364] **Today's pericope** tells of Jesus' first disciples. John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Lamb of God to two of his followers. One of them, **Andrew, found Simon Peter, his brother, and reported, “We have found the Messiah.”** Simon joined him and they followed Jesus. [TCB, 150]

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME PERSONALLY TODAY?

TODAY'S MASS is about vocation, about God's call. Vocation is not just for a few chosen people. And to say, *“There are no vocations now”* is simply not true. **Everyone is called by God to be something, to do something for others with their life and with their unique gifts.**

The First Reading is about **a young man who did not recognize God's call at first.** God called Samuel and he thought it was his master Eli. Twice God called, twice Samuel went to Eli, twice Eli told him to go back to sleep. The third time God called, Eli realized what was happening and told Samuel, *“The next time you hear the call, say, ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening’.* *When the Lord called the fourth time, Samuel was ready, ready to listen to God.”*

And *“Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him and let no word of his fall to the ground”.* That is, he continued to listen carefully to what God was saying, to listen to God's call. And, in turn, he passed on what he had heard to others. **God's Word is never to be kept just for ourselves.** That would be like the man who buried the talent he had been given in the ground.

Where the word of God is concerned, to listen is: **(1) to hear, (2) to understand, (3) to accept and assimilate as one's own and (4) to share with others by word and ACTION.** God is calling me now, today. What is he saying to me? Am I really listening?

The gospel is also about calling, in fact, about a second calling. It is about two men who are already disciples of John the Baptist. John points Jesus out to them, *“Look! There is the Lamb of God!”* John knows that his role of leadership is temporary, that he is to yield to the leadership of Jesus. The *‘Lamb of God’* is one of several titles John the evangelist gives to Jesus in this first chapter. It both links Jesus with the salvation history of the Jewish people and points to Jesus' ultimate sacrifice of his life in love for all of us.

The disciples begin, out of curiosity perhaps, to go after Jesus. Jesus turns round and asks them: **“What do you want?” Hear Jesus ask you that question today.** Generally we tend to think

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that we should be asking, What does God want? But no, **he also wants to know what we want.** The answer to that question is less for his benefit than for ours. **Our answer will tell us what our real priorities are with regard both to God and the people and the world around us.**

What do we really want from life, from God? It is not such an easy question to answer. It is easy to be superficial or flippant. But it tells us where we really are. And it is a question we will have to answer at different stages in our life as circumstances change.

And what is the disciples' response? Another question but also an answer to Jesus' query: "*Teacher (source of wisdom), where do you stay?*" (in Greek *menein*, 'to remain', a favorite Johannine word). In other words they are asking, "*Jesus, where are we to go to find you, to be with you? **Where in our lives do we encounter you?***" If that were to be OUR answer to Jesus' question, "*What do you want?*", we would be doing very well. Now Jesus answers their question: "*Come and see.*"

Knowing Jesus is a matter of experience. One could know the new Catechism of the Catholic Church, all 700 pages of it, by heart and still not know Jesus. **To know him in the Gospel sense is to seek, to find and to RESPOND to his loving presence in the fabric of our daily lives.**

It comes from taking a plunge, **trying out the teaching of Jesus** even when it seems to go against what most people think: **to love unconditionally, to forgive, to turn the other cheek, to carry one's cross after Jesus, to suffer abuse and persecution for being follower...**

The two disciples accept the invitation. They go and stay where Jesus stays and do so for the rest of that day. And what was the result of staying with Jesus? One of the two, **Andrew, became not only a committed follower, but also an evangelizer.** The two cannot be separated. He immediately went in great excitement and found his brother, Simon, and told him, "*We have found the Messiah!*" And thus Simon became Peter and also a follower, an apostle and a leader.

It is important to note that **Peter, in spite of his future important role, was not called directly by Jesus but through his brother.** And that happens again and again. **Everyone, including the greatest saints, were called by another, often lesser, person** and brought to Christ. Each one of us here was led to Jesus by other people. So, in conclusion, we ask ourselves: **a. What is God calling me to do, to be NOW, today?** Am I in a truly listening mode to hear what he wants to say to me? **b. Who is waiting for me to bring them to Jesus?** Who is waiting for the invitation, "*Come, and see?*" [Frank Doyle, SJ]

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

What are **my real priorities** with regard to God and the people and world around me?

Where in my life do I find and encounter Jesus' loving presence? How do I seek him each day?

What is God calling me to do, now, today? How will I attune myself to hear what he wants to say?

Who in my life is waiting for me to bring Jesus to them? Whom will I invite to come and see?

[Sources: Scripture readings- *The Catholic Bible, NAB translation, Home Study Edition, (TCB)*, and its Reading Guide (RG); *The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, [JSB]* Jewish Publication Society; *The Jerome Biblical Commentary, (JBC)* 1968 edition; *Dictionary of the Bible (DB)*, J.L.McKenzie, SJ; Wm Barclay, *John's Gospel, The Daily Bible Study Series [DBSS]*; *Sunday Scripture Reflections* by Frank Doyle, SJ at www.sacredspace.ie/livingspace. [Editor: Michael Hosemann].