

1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19, 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
John 1: 35-42

FOCUS: "Christ calls all people to come and see"

The Scripture readings for today pertain to vocations, the Latin term for our English word call. The Old Testament reading tells us about the call of Samuel, a prophet and judge in Israel. The Gospel tells us about the call of Andrew and his brother Simon, who became Peter the Rock, the Chief of the Apostles, upon whom the Lord was to build his Church. Both of these readings have lessons for all who are called to be Christians and for all who are called to serve others.

Let's look first at the vocation story of Samuel. He had a task in the temple of the Lord at Shiloh that was not difficult, but which demanded that he be on duty during the night. An oil lamp burned before the Ark of the Covenant from evening to morning, and Samuel slept near it in order to tend the lamp. The lamp in front of the Ark was like the sanctuary lamps we have in our Eucharistic chapels. They were not wax candles in glass, but an oil lamp with a wick which had to be tended regularly.

Samuel heard the Lord call him, but he was not familiar with the Lord and hurried to consult with his superior, the priest Eli. Samuel did not know how to listen. Eli instructed him that when he heard his name called again he should respond, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

The vocation story of Andrew and Simon also has something to teach us. The invitation to the two pedestrians was initiated by Jesus himself when he asked, "What are you looking for?" This was really a deep question, not by any means a casual one. It was a back-to-the basics question, one having to do with the very purpose of life. The Lord's further invitation to the pair was, "Come, and you will see."

To each of us present here today, called at our Baptism to live and act as Christian, the Scriptures ask, "Are you familiar with the Lord? Do you know how to listen?" Do we remember that when the Lord speaks to us in response to our petitions, he sometimes says yes, sometimes says no, sometimes says, wait? Are we too busy, too lazy, too proud to respond as Eli taught Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening?" quiet time with the Lord is essential for this.

To each and every one of us the Lord also asks, "What are you looking for?" Is it social security for the future? Is it peace in your family, workplace or neighborhood? Is it love and happiness instead of misunderstanding and confusion? Jesus says, "Come and see." In His life and in His Gospel you will find the answers to these vital questions.

There are perhaps three or four in the congregation today who are pondering God's call, not only to be Christians, but also to serve his Church in the priesthood or in religious vows. What are you looking for? What are you going to do with your life? What career or calling appeals to you? We greatly need the dedicated service of men and women willing to offer themselves full time to the Church. Many people are praying that your answers will be like Samuel's "Here I am, you called me."

