

Your Servant is Listening

*A Missionary Commentary on the
Sunday Readings*

Sunday Readings

1 Sam 3:3b-10, 19
Psalm 40:2+4, 7-8a, 8b-9, 10
1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
John 1:35-42

[USCCB link to the Sunday Readings](#)

A “call narrative” is the appropriate term to speak of our readings today. In the Old Testament passage we hear of God’s call to the young boy Samuel; the Gospel describes the invitation of Jesus to Andrew and Simon. All three individuals respond with generosity, following an unexpected invitation to serve the Lord and his people.

Samuel’s Background. Samuel was the son of Hannah and Elkanah. According to Jewish tradition, Samuel was about twelve years old when he received his prophetic call during a revelation at night. He was staying in the temple of Jerusalem, near the ark of God, which symbolized God’s presence. The elderly priest Eli was also staying in the temple.

As narrated in the first reading, Samuel did not recognize the voice of Yahweh who was calling him. Only on the third attempt, with assistance from Eli, does Samuel recognize Yahweh’s voice. He describes himself as God’s servant; he professes his readiness to serve the Lord; he dedicates his entire life to God as a prophet.

God’s Initiative. An important lesson that can be learned from these “call narratives” is that it is always God who acts first. It was God who called Samuel to service as a prophet; it was Jesus who called Andrew and Peter to be his disciples. Recall the words of Jesus: “You did not choose me; no, I chose you” (Jn 15:16). Yes, God calls, but we must respond by finding out who God is and what he is asking of us.

Role of Others. Notice that the boy Samuel needed another (Eli) to help him recognize God’s voice. Andrew and Peter came to know Jesus through the instrumentality of John the Baptist. Fortunately, all three listened to God’s voice that came to them through another person. This same dynamic is true for us; often it is through the words and example of others that we more clearly recognize God’s presence and action in our lives.

Generous Response. Samuel had the humility to listen to God’s voice and respond: “Here I am. You called me.... Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.” The two disciples, Andrew and Peter, are engaged by Jesus; he asks them: “What are you looking for?” They respond: “Rabbi, where do you stay?” Jesus responds with an invitation: “Come

next page

continued from previous page

and see.” And, Andrew and Peter begin to walk the path of discipleship. We ask ourselves: Has someone pointed us toward Jesus Christ, and have we had enough courage to go to see where Jesus lives?

Challenges. The “call narratives” of Samuel, Andrew, and Peter present us several challenging invitations. Do we take time to listen to God’s voice in daily life and in the Word of God (Scriptures)? Are we instruments that help lead others to discover and encounter Jesus? Do we often pray the words of today’s responsorial psalm: “Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will”?

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

Knowledge of the Old Testament helps us appreciate how God prepared for the coming of Jesus Christ. In the eleventh century B.C., Eli the priest assisted the young Samuel to recognize God’s voice.

Psalm

Today’s psalm response beautifully expresses how Samuel was ready to do God’s will in his life.

Second Reading

St. Paul gives us much practical wisdom about living the Christ-life in the midst of a very secular society with materialistic values.

Gospel

In John’s Gospel today we see how Jesus begins his organizing efforts by gathering disciples around him. He calls two brothers, Andrew and Simon, inviting them to freely “Come and See”—to judge and decide for themselves about their response.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James Kroeger, who recently published [Walking with Pope Francis: The Official Documents in Everyday Language](#) (Orbis Books – 2023).

Please pray for the missions.
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