

January 17, 2021

Is God calling me? Am I listening?

I believe that God never stops calling us. He knows each of us by name. He knows everything going on in our lives. He knows all our thoughts and desires. He has created us in His own image. He loves each of us personally. Since our baptism, we are all called God's children. He has a plan for each of us, a beautiful plan because He loves us and He wants each of us to be close to Him. He sends His only Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, to reveal Himself to each of us, to redeem us from our sins, to guide all our steps on our pilgrimage on earth so that we can return to Him and be with Him now and forever. The question we are all struggling with is: "*What does God want me to do?*" Every day is a new day, a new beginning. Every day, we can ask God: "*What do you want me to do today?*"

As we have completed our wonderful journey of Advent and Christmas, it is a good time to reflect on God's plan. It is a good time to pray in silence and LISTEN to God. It is a good time to meditate on Scriptures. It is a good time to reflect on the power of LECTIO DIVINA (meaning Divine reading in Latin), the power of meditating on the Word of God. I will never forget the first time a monk introduced me to this ancient tradition of Lectio Divina. This was part of my first retreat when discerning the call to the permanent diaconate (20 years ago...). The monk talked about the power of "*chewing the Word of God*". He used the beginning of John's Gospel. Three times, he read to us slowly the first encounter of John the Baptist and Jesus after Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River. John was standing with two of his own disciples when he watched Jesus walk by and said: "*BEHOLD, THE LAMB OF GOD*" (John 1:35). These five words changed the life of two disciples of John. This was God, through John the Baptist, CALLING THEM TO A NEW LIFE. When was last time you felt that GOD WAS CALLING YOU?

God can speak to us directly through our hearing His Word and "*chewing it*", meditating it slowly. God can also speak to us through His own "*messengers*", people around us. In John's Gospel, Jesus' first disciples responded to God's call through the words of John the Baptist. He had pointed out to them the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Hearing those words, they followed Jesus and their lives were totally changed. They stayed with Jesus that day. One of them that had heard the words of John the Baptist was Andrew. After his first encounter with Jesus, he found his brother Simon and told him: "*We have found the Messiah, Christ*". Then he brought his brother Simon to Jesus, who gave him a new name Cephas, which is translated Peter. What is amazing is the immediate action of Andrew and Jesus. It is the same for us. Our lives can be changed, transformed very quickly when we recognize God's voice, listen and act upon God's word.

I have felt God calling me several times in my life. As a 12-year old, through the words of a priest at a short retreat of classmates (my Catholic school) "*Your mother Mary will always protect you*", I heard in my heart that with Mary's support, I could do anything ...and then I thought that God wanted me to be a priest...When I was 20, my first trip to Africa (as a student in training in Cameroon), I discovered a new continent, a new culture and a desire to change my life. I may not have seen this as a call from God. But with hindsight, I now believe that God was calling me to assist the "*poor*" in the poorest countries of the world, which I did while spending 35 years as an economist and then a project manager at the World Bank, including multiple trips to countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and also living 3 full years in Bangladesh (one of the poorest countries of the world). This led me to a personal encounter with Mother Teresa in Calcutta (one hour flight from Bangladesh), which changed my spiritual life, and eventually led me hear the call to becoming a permanent deacon...and then a priest. This face to face encounter with Mother Teresa took place 40 years ago! More recently, after receiving the Eucharist, I heard Mother Teresa tell me clearly: "GO TO THE POOR!"

I have been meditating on these four words: GO TO THE POOR! I have prayed over this message: "*God, what do you want me to do? Go to serve the poor in Calcutta? Go as a missionary to Haiti, or El Salvador?*" Sometimes, it is difficult to discern God's will. But we should never ever give up. God is calling us all the time. As of now, I believe that God wants me to keep serving the poor in Waldorf: the poor in spirit (those who suffer in their relationship with God, no longer perceive God's love, or even no longer trust in God), the poor in physical/emotional health (those who suffer in their bodies and minds) and the financially poor (who may not have enough food or are afraid of being evicted from the place where they have a shelter, or are already homeless). I know that as a priest and pastor, the greatest assistance I can provide to the poor is to assist them in getting closer to God.

God is calling you! He wants you to be a more engaged disciple of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He wants to stretch you spiritually. He wants you to do HIS WILL. He wants you to know more about our Lord Jesus Christ. He wants you to follow Him every day of your lives. He wants you to pass on your Faith to your children and friends. He wants you to share your Joy and Peace with everyone. The only question remains: "*God, how do you want me to do all this?*"

May we all be inspired by the example of Andrew, who left everything to follow Jesus once he had encountered Him and believed that Jesus was truly the Messiah, the Savior. He could not wait to give the good news to his brother Simon, and to take him to Jesus!

One in Christ,
Fr. Alain



Religious Education News

CCD classes have resumed. Please continue to work on any classes you have missed. If you have any questions, please contact Nereida Tellechea at (301)645-7112, or email cre@olhoc.org

MAIL CALL

In the past few weeks, parishioners have called to say they've sent a check to OLHOC, and it has not been cashed. All checks received at the office have been sent to the bank.

Please consider online giving. It is a secure way to donate, and will not get lost in the mail - <https://olhoc.com/e-giving>

It's tax time!

If you would like your year end tax statement, please call or email the office.

Community Outreach

We are always collecting for the OLHOC "Sharing Sunday" box. All much needed, non-perishable food donated will be taken to the Food Bank and Women's Shelter.

Thank you, OLHOC, your generosity has been overwhelming! The next Outreach meeting is February 3, 2021 at 7p.m. on Zoom. The next Shepherd's table is February 18.

*****REMINDER*******

-Sanitize your hands before coming into church

-Masks are mandatory

-Maintain at least a 6 ft distance

-If you feel ill, stay home and watch Mass on www.olhoc.com -10 am on Sundays

Prayer for St. Joseph's Protection

Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so prompt, so strong,
before the throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires.

Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession,
and obtain for me from your Divine Son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power,

I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers.

Oh, St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms;

I dare not approach while he reposes near your heart.

Press him in my name and kiss his fine head for me and ask him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.

St. Joseph, patron of departing souls - pray for me.
Amen. (EWTN)

The Youth Support Team is an integral part of our Youth ministry at OLHOC. It consists of different components utilizing diverse gifts and time commitments of parents and other interested volunteers from our parish. These volunteer opportunities can range from assisting with special events (hospitality, chaperones, fundraisers, prayer team..), confirmation mentors, or joining the core team and work directly with the youth. Together we can help lead our youth closer to Christ! For more information please visit the website www.olhoc.org/ymteam or talk to Marlen Coles marlen@olhoc.org

CA/RCIA

Interested in joining and learning about the Catholic Church for the first time? Want to complete a Sacrament (Baptism, Eucharist, and/or Confirmation)? Classes meet on Wednesday, from 7 pm -9 pm. You may chose to come to the Father Martin Hall or virtually via Zoom. For more information, or to sign up, please contact Deacon Rich at deacon@olhoc.org or Diane and Mike Spurgeon at RCIA.olhoc@gmail.com

We hope you will join us!

We are asked to pray for:

Julissa Barientos
 Brandon Mack
 Ana Maria Delmira Sibrian Escobar
 Nestor Ermelindo Molina
 James Thompson
 Rebecca (Tess) Franch
 Joseph Albrittain
 Sid and Suszanna Marcus
 Aleli Puzon
 Patricia Delgado
 Ann Marie Hobart
 Larry McGraw
 Ilene Custer
 Derrick Webster
 Julie Davis
 David DeMarr
 Dunnie Proctor
 Amelia Vinceguerra
 Lorraine Celijewski
 Cren Wolden

Tabitha Barton
 Maria Townsend
 Chrystal Beauregard
 Sheryl Carter
 Alex Leon
 Sharketer Butler
 Steven Bowling
 Edna Yarngo
 Kathly Grimes
 Sheny Padilla
 Richard White
 Victor Cordero
 Georgiana Norgren
 Marie Marie Bottorf
 Dorian Webster
 Dionne Gause
 Billy Dexter
 Trena Price
 Erick M. Knapp
 Norm Green

The Dixons
 Grace Albrittain
 Elaine Moses
 Yvonne Buford
 Karen Zimmerman
 Steve Wyloge
 Terri Elizabeth McAllister Burnette
 Joanne Johnson
 John Hoza
 Mike Spurgeon
 Mary A. Dyson
 Kevin Viel Sr.
 Ligia Lam

and all our military and civilians serving in harm's way.

Pray for Peace



Mass Intentions this Week

Saturday, January 16, 9:00AM: Isaiah Strawberry
Saturday, January 16, 5:00 PM: Antoine Kanhanou (+)
Sunday, January 17, 8:30 AM: Antoine Kanhanou (+)
Sunday, January 17, 10:00 AM: Family of Josephina Knapp
Sunday, January 17, 11:30 AM: OLHOC Parishioners
Sunday, January 17, 7:00 PM: Jose & Patricia Mendoza
Monday, January 18, 9:00 AM: Antoine Kanhanou (+)
Tuesday, January 19, 9:00 AM: Daniel Andrews
Wednesday, January 20, 9:00 AM: Antoine Kanhanou (+)
Wednesday, January 20, 7:00 PM: President Joseph Biden
Thursday, January 21, 9:00 AM: Florentino Villanueva (+)
Friday, January 22, 8:30 AM : Sylvia Utibe Ita

TAKE ONE MISSALETTE HOME

This weekend, everyone is invited to take one MISSALETTE (covering Masses for Sundays from now through March 27, last week of Lent) and to keep it at home to use it for weekly prayer and reflection before coming to Sunday Mass at our church. This will allow you to get familiar with the weekly readings and meditate on the Mass prayers. If you know people who cannot come to the church, you may want to bring one MISSALETTE to their home so they can prepare themselves before watching the 10 am Sunday Mass on the OLHOC YouTube channel.

Tuesday Scripture Study- Join us on Tuesday mornings after the 9 am Mass to study the readings for the next Sunday.

Friday Scripture Study- The Friday night scripture study is now online. Please call the office for information on how to join us.

First Friday- The first Friday of each month the evening Mass is dedicated to promoting the Priesthood. Following evening Mass, devotion to the Alliance of the two Hearts.

First Saturday-Join members of the Marian Group on the first Saturday of the month after the 9 am Mass. Learn more about consecrating your life to Jesus through Mary.

Divine Mercy- Join us on the first Saturday of each month as we pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet as a community at 3 PM.

OLHOC Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please call the parish office or send email to office@olhoc.org.

Mass Readings for January 24, 2021

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

***First Reading**

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

***Second Reading**

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

***Gospel**

Mark 1:14-20

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