

January 17, 2021

Father Ed's Sunday Reading

(continued)

Twice God called, twice Samuel went to Eli, twice Eli told him to go back to sleep. The third time God called, Eli realised 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 kept the talent he had been given wrapped up in a cloth and buried it in the ground. 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 disciples begin – out of curiosity? – 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 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 favourite Johannine word). In other words they are asking, "Jesus, where are you to be found? 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 and where he stays is not primarily a matter of intellectual knowledge. It is not a matter of information. It is not a question of knowing all theology, dogmatic and moral, nor is it a question of being an expert in all the teaching and the rules of the Church: Pharisees of all times are good at that.

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, find and 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...

Come and see that that is the Way to follow, that there is no other way.

The two disciples accept the invitation. They do 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 an evangeliser – 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 the leader of the new community.

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?

And 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”?