

Scripture Study

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle B



Opening prayer

1 Samuel 3:3b-10,19

(Ps 40:2,4,7-10)

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a,17-20

John 1:35-42

Overview of the Gospel:

- Last Sunday marked the beginning of the liturgical season of Ordinary Time. This year, the Sunday Gospel readings will be taken mostly from the Gospel according to Mark, with some occasional readings (such as this Sunday) taken from the Gospel of John.
- This Sunday's reading takes place right after Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist at Bethany, and his temptation in the wilderness (verse 22; Matthew 3:13—4:11).
- Upon seeing Jesus approaching, John points him out as "the Lamb of God" (verse 36; Revelation 5:1-14). This title had significant connections to the Jewish Passover, and it's themes of sacrifice and deliverance (Exodus 12ff). Thus John prophesies Jesus' sacrificial mission.
- Jesus' first disciples, Andrew and another disciple traditionally identified as John, son of Zebedee, are former disciples of John the Baptist (see also Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11). In his great humility, John points them to the Messiah, and lets them go. When questioned later about this, he will say, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30)
- Though the two disciples were seeking the Messiah, it is Jesus who takes the initiative (verse 38; John 15:16). As they spend more time with him, their understanding of him grows from just a teacher, or "rabbi" (verse 38), to identifying him as the Messiah (verse 41).
- Jesus' renaming of Simon as *Kepha* (verse 42; Greek *Petros* = "Rock") anticipates a later occasion when Jesus will give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:13-19) and primacy and authority over his Church on earth.

Questions:

- What motivated the disciples of John to follow Jesus? Why didn't John follow after the One he pointed others to?
- In light of verses 30 and 31, how do you think John felt when his disciples left him for Jesus? In what ways are you called in humility to "decrease" so that Jesus can "increase"?
- How do you picture Andrew and John's first encounter with Jesus? Who was the first to speak? What tone of voice do you think he used?
- How do you think Simon felt when Jesus changed his name to *Kepha* (meaning "Rock")? What significant event did this early encounter anticipate (Matthew 16:13-19)?
- What is your response to the Andrews of the world to "come and see" Jesus in the circumstances of your everyday life? How can you "stay with him" throughout the day?
- Can you, like Andrew, say, "We have found the Messiah"? How or where have you found him? How can you further imitate Andrew to share the Lord?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 608, 1816, 436, 552-553, 880-881

Closing prayer

*Jesus is the teacher of holiness. I go to him because I want him to teach me how to become a saint.
Of what use is all I learn in school if I do not become holy?* -St. Francis de Sales

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings!

"Behold the Lamb of God!"

Scripture: *John 1:35-42*

Meditation: Who is Jesus for you? John calls Jesus the *Lamb of God* and thus signifies Jesus' mission as the One who redeems us from our sins. The blood of the *Passover Lamb* (Exodus 12) delivered the Israelites in Egypt from death. The blood of Jesus, the true Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7), delivers us from everlasting death and destruction. It is significant that John was the son of a priest, Zachariah, who participated in the daily sacrifice of a lamb in the temple for the sins of the people (Exodus 29). In Jesus he saw the true and only sacrifice which can deliver us from sin. How did John know the true identity of Jesus, as the Messiah? The Holy Spirit revealed to John Jesus' true nature, such that John bore witness that this is the Son of God. How can we be certain that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Son of the God? The Holy Spirit makes Christ known to us through the gift of faith. God gives us freely of his Spirit that we may comprehend the great mystery and plan of God to unite all things in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

John in his characteristic humility was eager to point beyond himself to the Christ. He did not hesitate to direct his disciples to the Lord Jesus. When two of John's disciples began to seek Jesus out, Jesus took the initiative to invite them into his company. He did not wait for them to get his attention. Instead he met them halfway. He asked them one of the most fundamental questions of life: "What are you looking for?" What were they looking for in Jesus and what were they aiming to get out



of life? Jesus asks each of us the same question: "What's the goal of your life? What are you aiming for and trying to get out of life?"

Jesus invites each of us to "come and see" for ourselves that his word is true and everlasting. "Come and see" is God's invitation for fellowship and communion with the One who made us in love for love. Augustine of Hippo tells us something very important about God and how he relates to us: "If you hadn't been called by God, what could you have done to turn back? Didn't the very One who called you when you were opposed to Him make it possible for you to turn back?" It is God who initiates and who draws us to himself. Without his grace, mercy, and help we could not find him.

When we discover something very important and valuable it's natural to want to share it with those closest to us. Andrew immediately went to his brother Simon and told him the good news of his discovery of Jesus. And it didn't take much to get Simon to "come and see" who this Jesus was. Jesus

reached out to Simon in the same way he did to Andrew earlier. He not only addressed Simon by his personal name, but he gave him a new name which signified the call God had for him. "Cephas" or "Peter" literally means "rock". To call someone a "rock" was one of the greatest compliments. The ancient rabbis had a saying that when God saw Abraham, he exclaimed: "I have discovered a rock to found the world upon". Through Abraham God established a nation for himself. Through faith Peter grasped who Jesus truly was -- the *Anointed One* (Messiah and Christ) and the only begotten Son of God. The New Testament describes the church as a spiritual house or temple with each member joined together as living stones (see 1 Peter 2:5). Faith in Jesus Christ makes us into rocks or spiritual stones. The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of faith to know Jesus personally, power to live the gospel faithfully, and courage to witness to others the joy and truth of the gospel. The Lord Jesus is ever ready to draw us near to himself. Do you seek to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ?

"Lord Jesus Christ, fill me with the power of your Holy Spirit and let me grow in the knowledge of your love and truth. Let your Spirit be aflame in my heart that I may know and love you more fervently and strive to do your will in all things."

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