

2 OT, Year B

Celebration Summary by Dale J. Sieverding: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" The beginning of the calendar year coincides with this utterance of John the Baptist. Sunday by Sunday the Christ is revealed in sacred song and spoken word so that the Christian faithful might know and listen to the voice of the One who calls each by name. Our preaching, proclamation and sung praise lead to the one response demanded in our common worship, "Here I am, Lord, I come to do you will." Our liturgy these first Sundays in Ordinary Time should maintain some continuity with Christmas/Epiphany so that we don't break completely with what is our 'high feast' celebrating Christ's birth, but continue the feast and celebration through to the Presentation of the Lord (Feb. 2). © 2003, OCP. All rights reserved.

First Reading 1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19

A reading from the first Book of Samuel

Samuel was **sleeping** in the temple of the LORD where the **ark** of God was.

The **LORD** called to Samuel, who answered, "**Here I am.**"

Samuel ran to **Eli** and said, "**Here I am.** You called me."

"I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to **sleep.**"

So he went back to **sleep.**

Again the LORD called **Samuel**, who **rose** and went to **Eli**.

"**Here I am,**" he said. "You **called** me."

But Eli answered, "I did **not** call you, my **son.** Go back to **sleep.**"

At **that** time **Samuel** was not **familiar** with the LORD,

because the LORD had not **revealed** anything to him as yet.

The LORD called Samuel **again**, for the **third** time.

Getting **up** and going to **Eli**, he said, "**Here I am.**"

You **called** me."

Then Eli understood that the **LORD** was calling the youth.

So he said to Samuel, "Go to **sleep**, and **if** you are called, reply,

Speak, LORD, for your servant is **listening.**"

When Samuel went to **sleep** in his place,

the LORD came and **revealed** his presence,

calling out as **before**, "**Samuel, Samuel!**"

Samuel answered, "**Speak**, for your servant is **listening.**"

Samuel grew **up**, and the LORD was with him,

not permitting any **word** of his to be without **effect.**

The word of God

1 Samuel 3:3b-10b, 19 Commentary by Tom Conry: Call stories not only explain how a person came to have a certain job – in this case, why Samuel is a prophet – but also (and more importantly) they act as a kind of validation for a claim to authority. Abraham is a patriarch because he followed the instructions of a voice in the desert. Samuel is a prophet on account of his fidelity to a call that he could not understand at first, but one to which he remained faithful nonetheless. Later on the writers of the New Testament will use these same kinds of patterns to describe the call of the disciples, of Paul, and of the whole community.

This particular story of the call of Samuel is all the more poignant because of the ironic assistance of Eli, who is a priest and judge at the shrine at Shiloh. Eli has two ne'er-do-well sons who would ordinarily be expected to inherit his office. They embezzled goods at the tabernacle and harassed women who came there for prayer and offerings. Samuel, on the other hand, is not Eli's natural son, but he acts as a good son should. He rises in the night when he hears the call, and listens to Eli's counsel.

In 1 Sam 3 we hear the stirrings of something entirely new in Israel. The old ways of the judges are breaking down and are no longer adequate to the new social situation. Eli's sons are worthless; Samuel, child of Hannah, who was once thought to be incapable of having children, now will become the hope of all Israel. The various contributors to 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings are telling of the beginning of the coming of their kingdom, from Samuel to Saul to David. © 2003, OCP. All rights reserved

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

✠(8a and 9a) Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

I have waited, waited for the LORD,
and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.
And he put a new song into my mouth,
a hymn to our God.

Sacrifice or offering you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;
then said I, "Behold I come."

"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,

to do your will, O my God, is my delight,
and your law is within my heart!"

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.

Commentary: Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10 by Virginia Smith: The verses used in today's response constitute only the first half of Psalm 40. It is generally agreed that the remainder was appended at a later date and is a lament whereas the original psalm is clearly grateful in tone.

The line, "*Sacrifice or oblation you wished not---holocausts or sin offerings you sought not...*" can be bewildering to a contemporary audience, leading them to wonder whether God has no interest in liturgy. Seen in a wider context, it becomes clear that this is not the case. A number of the prophets use similar exhortations. A more familiar passage from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount may shed more light on the subject. "*Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*" (Mt 5:23-24). What God seeks is the sincere living out of our faith. Merely plunking one's body in a pew every weekend is insufficient. As one pundit put it, sitting in a church doesn't make a person a Christian any more than sitting in a garage makes a person a Cadillac. There has to be some real sincerity involved, some effort to really live as a disciple of the risen Christ.

One way to begin might be to actually listen attentively to the words of the Mass, both those spoken by the celebrant on behalf of the congregation and our own responses. What are we actually saying? To what are we committing ourselves? How seriously do we take those commitments? If we're just mumbling the expected replies to the same old words each week, perhaps the admonition of today's psalm is meant for us. © 2008, OCP. All rights reserved.

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

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

The **body** is not for **immorality**, but for the **Lord**,
and the **Lord** is for the **body**;
God raised the **Lord** and will **also** raise us by **power**.

Do you not **know** that your **bodies** are members of **Christ**?
But whoever is **joined** to the Lord becomes one Spirit with God.
Avoid immorality.
Every **other** sin a person commits is **outside** the body,
but the **immoral** person sins against their **own** body.
Do you not **know** that your body
is a **temple** of the Holy **Spirit** within you,
whom you have from **God**, and that you are not your **own**?
For you have been purchased at a price.
Therefore **glorify** God in your **body**.

The word of God

Commentary 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20 by Tom Conry: The context of this reading indicates that Paul was looking forward to the end of the world; that is, to the end of the empire, to the establishment of a new situation that would be characterized by God's law of justice rather than Roman imperial rule.

It is important in this regard to understand what Corinth was and what it represented at the time of this letter: the prototypical imperial city, sacked, plundered and sold into slavery by Rome in 146 BCE, and then settled under Julius Caesar by army veterans, freed slaves, and the Roman urban poor. Never an elegant place, by the time of Paul it had acquired a reputation for greed, inequality, and an anything-goes ethos. It was an imperial boomtown, and emperor-worship was an important part of its economy. Cultic prostitution had been a part of the veneration of various regional gods for centuries, and it was important in Corinth for both religious and economic reasons. Paul saw this practice as a violation of God's creation in which the two become one flesh.

Paul seems to have understood the Corinthian community as a kind of alternative society, standing apart from the way of life that had characterized their existence before their baptism. Jesus had proclaimed a new historical situation, the kingdom of God. In view of this new situation, Paul urges the followers of Christ to live a new life as separate as possible from the old immoralities. © 2003, OCP. All rights reserved.

Gospel Acclamation: John 1:41, 17b ✠ Alleluia, alleluia.

We have found the Messiah:
Jesus Christ, who brings us truth and grace.

Gospel John 1:35-42

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

John was standing with two of his disciples,
and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said,
"Behold, the Lamb of God."

The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus.
Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them,
"What are you looking for?"

They said to him, "Rabbi"—which translated means Teacher—,
"where are you staying?"

He said to them, "Come, and you will see."

So they went and saw where Jesus was staying,
and they stayed with him that day.

It was about four in the afternoon.

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter,
was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus.

He first found his own brother Simon and told him,
"We have found the Messiah"— which is translated Christ—.

Then he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said,
"You are Simon the son of John;
you will be called Cephas"—which is translated Peter.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Lectionary for Mass in the Dioceses of the United States of America, volume I Copyright © 1970, 1997, 1998
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reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying,
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Commentary John 1:35-42 by Virginia Smith: John's Gospel is rather like a layer cake. Beneath each level of meaning lies another. Even after multiple readings, the Fourth Gospel is inexhaustible. In this very first chapter, one of the Gospel's principal themes surfaces: come and see. Coming closer to Jesus and seeing who he really is comprises a major motif. This, in turn, ties into another of John's themes, light versus darkness.

'Light' and 'seeing' are used in both a physical and a spiritual sense. For instance, in Chapter 4 the Samaritan woman invites the townspeople to "...come and see a man who told me everything I have done." And in Chapter 9, the man born blind, both physically and spiritually, comes into the light and gradually sees who Jesus is while the Pharisees, who believe themselves enlightened, plunge into the darkness. Jesus notes, "I came into the world for judgment so that those who do not see might see, and those

who do see might become blind.”

As it was for these and other scriptural characters, so it is for us. We are invited, not forced but invited, to first come to Jesus...to place our hand in his and trust him to lead us home to eternal life (another of John's motifs). Then we are asked to see...to constantly strive to know Jesus better and really hear what he is saying to us. It's not that much different from our other human relationships. Even with those closest to us, there is always more to know...hidden depths we never imagined.

And so Jesus beckons us to come closer and see more clearly, a task which will only be completed when we meet him face to face. © 2008, OCP. All rights reserved.

Please return lectionary to shelf on gift table.