



Contributed by Father Paul Voisin, C.R.

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME **January 17, 2021**

GATHERING TIME

(10-15 Minutes)

Introduction to the Word:

One saying that I have come to use often is “What you are looking for will determine what you get”. This rings true from my personal experience, including in the spiritual life. So, if I am looking for a particular skill, and am willing to “pay the price” to acquire that skill, it will seriously determine that this skill may be within my reach. If I have my eyes on it, I will try to work toward my goal. I experience this same reality when I go shopping, in particular when I am purchasing gifts for family and friends during one of my trips on a Canonical Visitation. I am a good shopper (people tell me, who have shopped with me). I am a shopper who goes in with firm ideas of what I am looking for, and for whom I am buying. I do not go willy-nilly in the store, picking things up and putting them down, wasting my time and the time of those who may serve me. I know what I am looking for, and that determines what I get.

In our gospel today, Jesus asks these new faces who are following Him, “What are you looking for?” They knew what they were looking for! They had been following John the Baptist, and their spiritual interests were obviously heightened by their experiences with John, and they already had firm ideas of what they were looking for to fulfill their desires for spiritual growth.

Warm-up Activity *(about 8-10 minutes):*

Perhaps often in life we may ask ourselves, “What am I looking for?” – in a friend, in a profession, in a purchase – from the sublime to the ridiculous. With time we may see a pattern developing, directing us towards a certain goal. In our human condition we may have “detours,” and lose that direction, but when we “come to our senses” we are back on track.

- a) Can you think of a “What am I looking for?” moment in your life, and how you responded to it?
- b) How have we discovered that what we were “looking for” was not really what we “wanted”?

The Table of the Word

Many seminaries and religious communities offer a ‘Come and See’ experience, an opportunity to spend (at least) a weekend in the seminary/monastery/religious house. It is a significant introduction to the life “within”. Naturally, this has usually been preceded by conversations with a Rector/Vocation Director/Spiritual Director, so that the possible candidate has some idea of what to expect. There is a parallel with the disciples of John the Baptist in the gospel. They have been hearing John’s wise teachings, which not only answered many of their spiritual questions, but brought other questions to light. Introductory programs, in any area of professional or academic life, can have the same influence, heightening our awareness of what we are looking for, and how to achieve it. I can remember a university professor expressing this when he said that “once you know, you discover how much you do not know”. There is always more to learn and experience. So, the disciples of John were “prepared” to follow Jesus, prepared for more teachings, and prepared to respond to what they were hearing. In the classical philosophical picture, the disciple lives on every word that comes from the mouth of the master. The disciple willingly accepts the “discipline” (from the same root word!) that the master preaches, in order to be like the master.

Penitential Rite:

We seek a deeper life in Christ, like those disciples who began to follow Him. As we follow, we discover more and more what we are truly looking for.

Lord Jesus, I hear Your call and want to follow You, Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, give me insight into how to grow in my following of You, Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, help me to be a “light” to others whom You are calling, Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray:

Holy God,

we bow before you, awestruck by who You are.

You are light and life, grace and mercy, just and right,

and filled with love and power.

Let our hearts draw near to You today.

We seek you with all our hearts

because we know that our desires are found and fulfilled in You.

We want to know You, Lord.

You desire relationship and so we say, yes.

Yes, Lord.

Reveal yourself to us today as we seek Your face.

Without you, our becoming loses its fire and our doing loses its purpose.

Guide our steps and our hearts ever closer to You.

Help us to know Your voice and respond when You call.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

(author unknown)

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(As Christians we believe that the **WORD** of God we hear proclaimed each Sunday is an empowering word, and that God is present in the word proclaimed. This is the word that God wants us to hear today. The dynamic of the small Christian community, namely, reflecting on our life story within the context of this word, and sharing the insights of these reflections, is such that God's Spirit becomes present, and the gifts of the Spirit are experienced as empowering and life giving.)

FIRST READING (*1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19*)

Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" He answered, "Here I am." Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, since you called me" Eli said, "I did not call. Go back and lie down." So, he went and lay down.

Once again, the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, since you called me." He replied, "I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down." Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

Once again, the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, since you called me."

Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if someone calls say "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him and let no word of his fall to the ground.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (*1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20*)

The body – that is not meant for fornication; it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God, who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise us up too.

You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ. But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body.

Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (*John 1:35-42*)

As John stood with two of his disciples, John passed, and John stared hard at him and said, "Look, there is the lamb of God." Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them, following and said, "What do you want?" They answered, "Rabbi" – which means Teacher – "Where do you live?" "Come and see" he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour.

One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" – which means the Christ – and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, "You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas" – meaning Rock. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

COMMENTARY:

In the First Reading God reveals to us how we will find Him. He takes the initiative! Samuel was a young servant of God, and Eli was his guide and mentor in the ways of God. When God called Samuel, he did not recognize that it was the voice of God, but thought it was Eli. Eli, experienced in the ways of God, eventually directed him to understand that it was the voice of God, and thus the life of Samuel changed forever. Perhaps we can think of when we have been a “Samuel” and have known “Eli’s” in our lives, people who were more experienced in the ways of the Lord, and helped us to recognize, understand, and respond to the voice of God. We cannot be a Samuel forever, and we must come to assume being an “Eli,” helping others to listen to the voice of God too.

St. Paul speaks so beautifully in his letters about the analogy of the body. He calls the body “the Temple of the Holy Spirit”, entrusted to us as a gift from God. It is to be cared for and protected, and we are to care for our body as the giver (God) intended. Saint John Paul II spoke so beautifully about the body, leading to the development of “The Theology of the Body”. It is a challenge for us, in our human condition, to discover this will of God, the intention of the “giver,” and care for our physical body accordingly.

The disciples of John the Baptist took seriously the words of John when he pointed to Jesus and said, “This is the Lamb of God!” They left him and followed Jesus. John was not discouraged or upset with this, because he knew that this was his mission – to prepare the way of the Lord. He was not the Messiah, he was not “the light,” but the one to prepare the way. The disciples approach Jesus, and when He turns around to ask them, “What are you looking for?” I can imagine that they were nervous, and that is why (for me) their answer was not coherent. If we had that opportunity to be with Jesus, I am sure that the last thing we would ask is, “Where do you live?” In our spiritual lives, as followers of Jesus, He is asking us the same question: “What are you looking for?” If we are looking for God’s love, for truth, for forgiveness, for the grace of God, for compassion, peace, and a reason to live – we have found it in Jesus! We have each followed different paths to arrive at this same “place”. His revelation is not a secret. He is present to us, not in hiding. His love bombards us.

Allow 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19)

The call of Samuel is dramatic, yet gentle. God can reveal Himself in many ways, often in ways we do not expect. Fortunately, many of us have known an ‘Eli’ who could help us to recognize, accept and respond to this call. In a spirit of trust and confidence in God, then, we open ourselves and echo the inspired words of Samuel, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening”.

- a) Can I recognize an “Eli moment” in my life, when someone’s testimony or advice opened me to God, and to discovering how God wanted me to be, and what to do?
- b) Am I a good listener?
- c) How have I been an “Eli” to someone, so that my testimony or advice can open them to God, and to discovering how God wants them to be, and what God wants them to do?

2. “Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20)
How great is the gift of life that God has given us! God has raised up humanity in the coming of His Son to us, as one like us. Whereas sometimes people speak of being (only) “human” as something derogatory, surely that was not the intention of God in creating us, and having His Son share this creation.

- a) How am I conscious of my body as “the temple of the Holy Spirit”, and how does that influence my care for my physical life?
- b) What do I try to “keep away from”?
- c) How am I helping others to recognize themselves, and in particular their body, as a “temple of the Holy Spirit”?

3. “Come and see” (John 1:35-42)

Jesus invited the disciples of John the Baptist to follow him – to “come and see”. They had already experienced a master-disciple relationship with John, so they easily could respond with enthusiasm, hoping to “see” something that would be worth their time and effort. It had sure ‘paid off’ with John! This allowed them to trust Jesus and open themselves to His life and teaching, and His discipline.

- a) Did I have a “come and see” moment with Jesus, when I felt His call in a particularly new and challenging way?
- b) What and/or who allowed me to respond, and to discover Jesus as the Messiah?
- c) How have I proclaimed to others that “I have found the Messiah”?

CARING-PRAYING TIME: (15-20 minutes)

1. Word of the Week: “Come and See”

2. Suggestions for the Week:

This week, try to be more aware of Jesus calling you into a deeper relationship with Him, a greater commitment, and a greater service of Him. In your encounters with others – in person, on the telephone, or online – see yourself as passing on the invitation of Jesus, so that these people in your life will open their hearts and minds to discovering what following Jesus really looks like. This week you are the one, echoing the words of John the Baptist, who will say to others (and show them): “There is the Lamb of God”. Do not underestimate the power and influence you have in the lives of others, that God wants to be used for good, and to encourage others to know, love, and serve Him. Be an “Eli” when someone comes to you with a query or a problem, when they cannot recognize the voice of God calling (without the help of another). Help others to see that the “discipline” you follow makes you a disciple, and through the grace of God this can be the life of all who have a sincere desire to look for more in life, in particular their life with God. Hopefully your influence will help them “to get” what they are looking for.

3. Intercessions:

We now turn to God, having found in Him, and in His Son, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, a life-giving, healing, and redeeming relationship in Him.

That we may continue to seek out and listen to the voice of God in our lives, responding with “Speak Lord, your servant is listening”. We pray ... **Hear us, O Lord**

That, like Eli, we will be an instrument of God in the lives of others, helping them to hear and respond to the call of God. We pray ... **Hear us, O Lord**

That all people may show greater respect for the body that God has given to them, and cherish their lives. We pray ... **Hear us, O Lord**

That we may not delay in the invitation of the Lord to “Come and see”, but will follow Him faithfully. We pray ... **Hear us, O Lord**

That we will all get what we are looking for, in union with Jesus Christ. We pray...**Hear us, O Lord**

How can we help you in prayer this week?

Let us pray:

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think I am following your will

does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you

does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,

though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore I will trust you always though

I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,

and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

(Thomas Merton)

With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God's favours today, we pray that all those in our influence be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we pray as one, OUR FATHER

Celebrating the Word, Resurrection Ministries of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province (including the former Resurrection Centre), 265 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G7. ([Celebrating the Word](#) was founded by Father Frank Ruetz, C.R. deceased 2012). For information: website: www.resurrectionists.ca. Email: provincialoffice@resurrectioncollege.ca The Scripture version used in this commentary is the [New Revised Standard Version](#) (copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA).