

# *Gratitude Foundation*

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*“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?  
Has only this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?”*

(Lk. 17:15-17)

## **The Second Sunday of Ordinary Time—Year B**

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*“In all things give thanks, it is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”*

(1 Thess: 5:18)

# Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Reading 1

### **1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19**

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.

## Responsorial Psalm

### **Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10**

R. (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.

R. **Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

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."

**R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

"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!"

**R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

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

**R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

## **Reading II**

### **1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20**

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 his power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?  
But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one Spirit with him.  
Avoid immorality.

Every other sin a person commits is outside the body,  
but the immoral person sins against his 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.

### **Alleluia**

#### **Jn 1:41, 17b**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

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

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

## Gospel

### Jn 1:35-42

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.

## Exegesis

### 1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19

It is always important to understand the setting of any scripture pericope. Verse 1 of Chapter 3 sets the stage for us, "During the time young Samuel was minister to the Lord under Eli, a revelation of the Lord was uncommon and vision infrequent." The previous chapter explains why this is so. Eli and his sons and the people had strayed from God. As ritual priests of the altar, Eli's sons were shepherding themselves and not the people, "Now the sons of Eli were wicked, they had respect neither for the Lord nor the priests' duties toward the people." (1 Sam. 2:12). While people stray from God, it is not so much that God is not speaking; the reality is that people are not listening.

As a child Samuel was presented to the Lord by his mother Hannah. He is young and innocent and inexperienced. He is not yet corrupted by society around him. He is close to the Lord, sleeping in the sanctuary next to the Ark. He hears the Lord calling him but does not have yet the experience of listening to God's voice and he does not recognize the Lord speaking to him. God continues to call him by name and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> call Samuel comes to recognize the voice of God. Now he knows God's voice. Throughout scripture the 3<sup>rd</sup> day or the third call is very significant. It often connotes the manifestation of God.

We are not told of the message given to Samuel. We must read on. The message is not an easy one. It speaks of the hard reality of the consequences of straying from God and His commandments. Samuel speaks the harsh truth to Eli and his prophecy will come true. Samuel becomes a dedicated prophet, speaking the truth even when it is difficult.

## **Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10**

This beginning of Psalm 40 is a hymn of thanksgiving. The psalmist sings of gratitude to God who hears our cries and who opens our ears that we may hear His voice. This two-way communication with God allows us to come to know God and ourselves. True delight as the psalmist proclaims is to come to know and do the will of God. It is about aligning our deepest desires with God's will for us, "To do your will, O my God, is my delight, and Your law is written in my heart." True happiness comes from oneness with God. For that we are grateful.

## **1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20**

Scripture often reveals multi levels of meaning and truth. There is first the reality of the natural human events that occur in time in human history. There is also the spiritual reality, the spiritual truth, or the spiritual lesson that God wants to reveal to us. St. Paul is addressing some serious sexual promiscuity that he encountered in the Church at Corinth. Whereas the natural law speaks for itself, the spiritual lesson is that we were called to something more. We are called to be temples of the Holy Spirit. At the Last Supper Jesus spoke of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There is something very profound about this abiding presence of God within us. God is being itself, so to the extent that we have being, we share in the very life of God. That profound gift of grace will enable, indeed empower us, to live beyond the natural desires of the flesh. Living out our calling as temples of the Holy Spirit will allow us to glorify God with our lives.

## **Jn 1:35-42**

John's Gospel is profoundly deep and rich in symbolism. John, the beloved disciple, has a deep spiritual connection with Jesus and that flows throughout his Gospel and his Letters. Our Gospel passage today does not include the beginning of Verse 35. The verse begins, "The next day..." Following along in Chapter One it is now the third day. The third day is significant. God reveals Himself on the third day, the great theophany, "...be ready for the third day; for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai before the eyes of all the people." (Ex. 19:11). John's Gospel is full of personal encounters with Jesus. Each encounter with Jesus is a theophany, an encounter with God. The first disciples encounter Jesus for the first time in our Gospel passage today.

Historians tell us that perhaps tens of thousands of people came to John the Baptist to be baptized in the Jordan. What were they looking for? Why did they come? The desire for God innate within us is a driving force. Whether we recognize that yearning within us is another question. God is what we are looking for. Jesus asks the question, "what are you looking for." Jesus, of course, knows that He is the answer to that question. He invites them to come and see, come, and discover for yourselves.

Andrew is the only one of the two disciples of John the Baptist that is named. Some scholars suggest that the other could be John, the beloved disciple himself. It would certainly follow the trend of John to speak of himself as the "other disciple." There is no clear evidence that this is so, but it would be fitting that John would be one of the first disciples to follow Jesus.

People are changed by the encounter with Jesus. John the Baptist reveals Jesus as the Lamb of God. He has come to know His identity as the Messiah, the Suffering Servant. The first disciples first call him "Rabbi" or "teacher." After the encounter with Jesus, Andrew seeks out his brother Peter and told him, "We have found the Messiah." Andrew comes to know His identity as well and reveals Him to his brother Simon.

Life is a journey of discovery, a discovery of God and self. In the encounter with God both are revealed. Jesus reveals to Simon his true identity. “You are Simon the son of John, you will be called Cephas” – which is translated Peter. “Cephas” is the Hebrew/Aramaic word for rock, “Petros” is the Latin translation for rock, and finally “Peter” in English. The imagery of God as “Rock” runs throughout sacred scripture. Speaking of the rock that Moses struck in the desert, St. Paul says “the Rock was Christ.” The Psalmist speaks of God as the “Rock of our Salvation.” The water of life flowed from the Rock that Moses struck in the desert. Jesus was standing on the rock of Caesarea Philippi when He proclaimed, “Peter you are Rock, and upon this Rock I will build My Church.” Peter would become the foundation of Christ’s Church. A Church from which the flow of God’s life-giving grace will flow forever. Much is revealed in this first encounter with the Messiah.

## Reflection

The message of the Christmas Season is the gift of God’s love. It is summed up in the famous passage from the third Chapter of the Gospel of John, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that those who believe in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.” Born for you is a savior, Jesus Christ the Lord. You are the object of God’s love for you and no-one can take your place.

Now the imagery of scripture turns to our response to God’s gift of love. Samuel in today’s first reading has put himself in position. He has put himself in the path of grace. He is in the temple of God. He hears a voice, and he responds by running to Eli. It was not Eli who was calling him, it was God. Samuel did not recognize the voice of God. On the third time, with Eli’s spiritual direction, he does recognize the voice of God and answers. “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” The scripture then tells us, “Samuel grew up, and the Lord was with him.” The Lord was with Samuel because he listened and learned to recognize the voice of God in his life and then he responded to that voice.

God is infinite and His voice is always with us and within us. The “transmitter” is always on. The question is, “are we listening?” and if we are, “do we recognize the voice of God?” The problems are twofold as I see it. First, we live in a very noisy world. The static of everyday life leaves little room for God these days. We have become so used to background noise. The electronics are always on and transmitting. We are finite beings, and our attention is so taken up by other things that we leave little room for God.

Secondly, because we have shut God out of our lives, we then like young Samuel, do not recognize the voice of God speaking to us. Jesus reminds us that we must come to know the voice of the Shepherd. We come to know the voice by listening and discerning the voice God in our lives. Like Samuel, we also must put ourselves in a position to hear the voice. We must find the quiet time to listen. We must put ourselves in the path of Grace.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of us your faithful, and enkindle within us the fire of Your love.

In the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

*F. Glenn*



## Personal Witness

I am a second career or late vocation. I entered the seminary at the age of 42 and was ordained a Catholic Priest 5 years later. I graduated college with a degree in business administration with a specialization in accounting and finance. I graduated on a Friday and went to work on the following Monday. It was a dream job working for a CPA firm in my hometown. I became a partner in the company in 4 years and I helped to grow the single office firm into a multi-state regional CPA firm with 12 offices and several hundred employees. My life was singularly focused on work. The normal work year consists of 2,080 hours and I worked consistently over 3,000 hours. There was a lot of satisfaction in success, in reaching goals, and achieving results. For every milestone, however, there was a new one on the horizon. The journey became less and less satisfying. There was something missing in my life, and I did not know what it was.

During this time a very close friend of mine who was my age, with whom I played football in college, and my college roommate, was killed in an automobile accident. He was alone in his vehicle, parked at a red light. He was struck broadside by a drunk driver. He was on his way to a men's league basketball tournament. If not for being out of town on a business trip, I would have been in the car with him. He left behind a pregnant wife. He would never see his only son in this lifetime.

My first concern was for my friend and his eternal soul. He was a good friend, a good person, and a great husband to his young wife. He would have been a great family man. I know that he was a believer, but he was not particularly religious. He was not a church goer. I continue to pray for him to this day, almost forty years later.

After the mourning process of several weeks, I really began to do some soul searching of my own. What if I were in that car? Was I in right relationship with God? Was I ready to meet Jesus face to face? The inner journey that followed made me realize just how far I had drifted from God. I was a religious person. I attended Mass regularly every Sunday and holyday of obligation. I attended out of a sense of obligation. I had become very mechanical in my faith. The loss of my friend sent me searching.

An elderly friend of mine recognized my restless heart. He signed me up for a Cursillo weekend retreat and insisted that I attend. I obliged only because of my friendship with him and my deep respect for him. I also recognized joy and peace in him that I wanted. On the Saturday evening of that weekend God softened my heart. During the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I experienced the embrace of God's love as never before. Over the years I had built up a protective shield around my heart, not allowing myself to love and experience love. I was not allowing God or others in, or even myself for that matter. God's grace changed that in an instant.

From the Confession I walked into the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and knelt before the Lord. What happened next would change my life forever. Like Samuel I said in my heart, "speak Lord you servant is listening." At that moment my life passed before me. My faith moved from belief to knowledge. I was transported to my childhood mountain-top experience of God, that clear and cold January night on my grandparent's farm. As I relived that moment once again, I knew that God was real, that the Church established on the Rock of St. Peter was real, and that God had a plan for me in His Church. In my heart I heard Jesus speaking to me, it was in my grandfather's voice as clear as if he were sitting next to me. The voice said, "You are a priest."

At that point in my life, I had never really thought seriously of the priesthood. I certainly did not feel worthy, and for good reason. We often speak of a vocation as a calling from God. My experience was much different, it was more a revelation of my true self. It took me several years to fully understand that moment in time. To this day I feel that my life still flows from that encounter. It was the third day of that retreat. We were told that the rest of our lives would be living out the fourth day. It is a "day" filled with love, joy, and peace. It is a "day" filled with gratitude!

*Fr. Glenn*