

# CATHOLIC DISTANCE UNIVERSITY

## Homily Thoughts for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

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I Samuel 3:3-10, 19

Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10

I Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20

John 1:35-42

We are now in the so-called Ordinary Time and so we learn the qualities of Christianity. One dimension of Christianity is friendship with God. Pope Benedict XVI explains what friendship means: “What is friendship? *Idem velle, idem nolle* – wanting the same things, rejecting the same things: this was how it was expressed in antiquity. Friendship is a communion of thinking and willing. The Lord says the same thing to us most insistently: “I know my own and my own know me” (*Jn* 10:14). The Shepherd calls his own by name (cf. *Jn* 10:3). He knows me by name. I am not just some nameless being in the infinity of the universe. He knows me personally. Do I know him? The friendship that he bestows upon me can only mean that I too try to know him better; that in the Scriptures, in the Sacraments, in prayer, in the communion of saints, in the people who come to me, sent by him, I try to come to know the Lord himself more and more. Friendship is not just about knowing someone, it is above all a communion of the will. It means that my will grows into ever greater conformity with his will.”

The *First Reading* tells us of the experience of Samuel a young boy living in the temple precincts for the service of the Lord. Then he is called by God. Eli knows what being called involves: we learn something about being called. The response is: “Speak Lord your servant is listening.” Here is a message about the disponibility of the Christian life. A good way to start the year.

The *Responsorial Psalm* which picks up the refrain has us singing about the nature of this disponibility. This disponibility itself is a gift from God: “he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God.” Humanity has been created to give glory to God. The psalmist knows that this is a grace. God has given him “ears open to obedience you gave me.” Obedience for some reason has a bad name in the US but it is still a reality of life that no amount of denigration can remove. The result of the gift of grace is that: “to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart!” This is not oppression but rather the creature being elevated to the fullness of being human.

In the *Second Reading*, we hear more about what friendship with God involves. It involves the disposition of our bodies as well. Horror of horrors! This sounds strange to a culture brought up on the philosophy of Descartes and his strict division between the life of the mind and the life of the body as if they are completely unconnected. The Hebrew mindset that we follow because it is based on revelation holds that we are a mind-body unity as you can see from Paul's words.

This sentence sums up his teaching: "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?" Hence there are no minor sins of the body. All of this safeguarding of our bodily presence again is not mere caprice on the part of God. He knows that we are bodily creatures and so our bodily presence is needed for our participation in human community. As we corrupt our bodies we lose the proper meaning of being with others in community and particularly in love. We are called to live our lives in bodily terms and so to express the riches of the Incarnation in our world. We are "to glorify God in our bodies."

The Gospel also presents us with a calling. In this case it is the calling of two disciples of John the Baptist. They meet Jesus and realize that "we have found the Messiah." Jesus shows them where he lives, the action of a friend. At that time there were many who longed for and prayed for the coming of the Messiah. These are some of the men who did so. Now bear in mind they had not seen anything spectacular. There were no lights in the sky, no Hollywood flim-flam. They met Jesus and they were convinced.

Then Simon hears from one of them that they have found the Messiah. He was brought to Jesus—notice the bodily activity that this involves. The calling runs through the relationships of the community. Jesus meets Simon and changes his name which is a traditional gesture at significant times in one's life. He calls Simon Kephas. This name means 'rock' which we translate as *Petrus* in Latin or Peter in English. This new name will gain in significance during Jesus' public life. Notice that these men simply follow Jesus, there is no whining about how inconvenient it might be.