

Commentary on Sunday Scripture – Year B

Second Ordinary Sunday

First reading:

(1 Samuel 3.3-10, 19)

The Call of Samuel

In the readings of Sundays in 'Ordinary Time', the first reading normally links to the gospel reading, and this is a superb example of such a link. The call of Samuel and his response prepare for the call of the first disciples of Jesus.

The call of the young boy Samuel into the Lord's service is always a favourite. It is easy to imagine the boy lying, dozing on his mat in the half-darkness, hearing the voice murmur 'Shmuel' (the Hebrew form of his name). Was it really a call, was it the old prophet calling, or just the wind in the pillars of the Temple? He has all the directness, willingness and simplicity of a child, the sort of qualities needed for the Kingdom of God.

Often, however, in the same way we do not know whether an 'inspiration' is really the call of God or our own imagination. Prayer and advice help in discerning the genuine call from a madcap scheme! Others may know us better than we know ourselves, and God's call is always fitted to our true nature.

Question:

How have you heard God's call?

Second reading:

(1 Corinthians 6.13-15, 17-20)

The Body Belongs to Christ

This is the first of six consecutive Sunday readings from Paul's letter.

The Christian community at Corinth was a troublesome lot, and it seems to have lacked any resident human guide. They relied on the Holy Spirit, backed up by several letters from Paul.

Here we have Paul's most forceful reason for sexual self-control: as Christ lives in us by his Spirit, all our bodily members are Christ's, and Christ is involved in every movement of them. This should give us a wonderful reverence for our bodies, knowing that we implicate Christ in all our body's activities.

The most powerful expression comes in verse 16 (omitted in the public reading, perhaps as being too pointed) 'anyone who attaches himself to a prostitute is one body with her, since the two become one flesh'.

Christ is involved in a wonderful way in the sexual act of procreation, giving a couple the inestimable privilege and joy of sharing in God's work of creation. But Christ is also abused by a Christian's abuse of sex.

Question:

How does it affect me that my body is Christ's body?

Commentary on Sunday Scripture – Year B

Gospel:

(John 1.35-42)

The First Disciples

This year the ordinary Sunday gospel readings are taken from Mark, enabling us to get a full picture of that gospel. But Mark is the shortest of the gospels, and is not quite long enough, so just occasionally a reading from John slips in to complete the picture.

This story of the call of the first disciples takes place in the Jordan valley, where John was baptizing. The first two to be called are disciples of John, so had joined his group of those waiting for the Messiah. They were ready when John pointed him out.

It is striking that Jesus first calls them to be with him, and first of all they remain with him for a time. First in our call to follow Christ comes prayer and getting to know Christ, before we can actively work for Christ and bring others to share his joy. Only after this repose with Jesus do they sprint off in their enthusiasm and bring others to join in the benefits they have received from the tranquillity of keeping company with Jesus

Question:

As a disciple of Jesus, do I spend enough time simply being with him?
