

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 1:41, 17b

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

We have found the Messiah:

Jesus Christ, who brings us truth and grace.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 1:35-42; L65B

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.



Reflecting on the Gospel

Now that we are in Ordinary Time it might be surprising to read from the Gospel of John. After all, we are in "Year B" when we read primarily from Mark. Even so, we begin with the Gospel of John, the author of which is also known as "The Theologian." And the theology in this gospel can also be called Christology, for what he says about Jesus he says about God. The two are in a close, dynamic relationship so that Jesus can say, "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30). In today's story we have the calling of the first disciples, only one of

whom is named, Andrew the brother of Simon Peter. The other disciple has traditionally been understood to be the "beloved disciple" or "the disciple whom Jesus loved," even though he is not named such here.

Only later, beginning with the Last Supper, do we have that name (13:23-26; 19:25-27; 20:2-10; 21:7; 21:20-23; 21:24). But if this unnamed disciple

from chapter 1 is the same as the beloved disciple from later chapters, then the "eyewitness" (John 19:35) of the Fourth Gospel would have been present with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry.

Andrew and the unnamed disciple evangelize Simon, Andrew's brother, by saying they have found the Messiah. They

bring Simon to Jesus. And before Simon can say a word, Jesus names him "Cephas," the Aramaic term for "Rock," translated into Greek as "Petros," from which we get the name "Peter." This story of Jesus naming Simon "Peter" is much different than that in the Synoptics, where Jesus names him "Peter" only after Simon confesses Jesus as the Messiah (Matt 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20). The Gospel of John, with its intense emphasis on Jesus, does not allow the possibility of Simon's name change to be associated with his confession, or absolutely anything else Simon has done. In fact, this seems to be why the Gospel of John places this story in the first chapter, immediately after the call of the first disciples. Moreover, Andrew, rather than his brother Simon, is the one who says Jesus is the Messiah. Simon merely hears the news and comes to meet Jesus. In the Gospel of John, Jesus exercises authority not dependent upon human beings. In this case, we see clearly Johannine theology with its overriding emphasis on Jesus. For this reason and many others the author of this gospel has been named "The Theologian."

Living the Paschal Mystery

The gospel story about Peter reminds us that Jesus takes the initiative with us, his disciples. He sees who we truly are and calls us by name, even to the point of giving us a new name! Once we are known by Jesus, there is no need to "perform" or "meet targets." We may rest in the knowledge that we are known by him. Like Simon Peter, we each have a destiny, a purpose, and meaning. Like Andrew, we also have a mission, and that is to proclaim Jesus to others. Only by Andrew's proclamation did Simon learn about Jesus. And Andrew learned about Jesus only by John the Baptist's testimony.

In our own lives we recognize that we learned about Jesus from someone else, whether a parent, grandparent, teacher, or friend. We too tell another about Jesus. In this way Christian faith is passed from one generation to the next. Evangelization is a hallmark of Christian identity from the beginning, as we

see in today's gospel. May we have zeal for evangelization that comes from the surety that we are known personally by Jesus.

Focusing the Gospel

John 1:35-42

In John's proclamation of Jesus as the "Lamb of God," the age of the prophets ends and the era of the Messiah begins.

Jesus' invitation to Andrew, "Come, and you will see," so moves Andrew that he invites his brother Simon Peter to come and see for himself. This is the first of three episodes in John's gospel in which Andrew introduces someone to Christ: Andrew brings to Jesus the lad with the five barley loaves and a couple of dried fish (John 6:8-9) and it is Andrew who asks Jesus to meet with the Greeks who approach Andrew—"Sir, we would like to see Jesus" (John 12:21).

Focusing the First Reading

1 Sam 3:3b-10, 19

Today's first reading also recounts a call from God: the beginning of the work of Samuel, Israel's first great prophet. There are two parallels to today's gospel: The priest Eli serves in the same role as Andrew does in today's gospel, facilitating the young Samuel's meeting with the Lord. Like John the Baptist, Samuel serves as a "bridge" figure between Israel's era of the judges and the era of the kings.

Focusing the Responsorial Psalm

Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10 (8a, 9a)

The antiphon to today's responsorial psalm mirrors the response of the young Samuel to the Lord's call (first reading). The psalm is a song of thanksgiving from one who has been rescued by God and now sings the "new song" of hope and mercy of God that he has experienced. The psalmist stands before the Lord ready to speak his word. For the psalmist, the perfect offering for God's blessing is not a ritual sacrifice but obedience and trust.

Focusing the Second Reading

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

The second readings for the first fourteen Sundays of Ordinary Time in Year B of the Lectionary cycle are taken from Paul's two letters to the Christian community he founded at Corinth. Corinth was considered the gateway between the East and West of antiquity, a city of ethnic and cultural diversity. Corinth also had a well-earned reputation for licentiousness and moral depravity—in some part a reaction to the classic exaltation of the ascetic and scorn of the physical. Greek dramatists often portrayed Corinthians as loud, drunk, and depraved; in Greek, the word "Corinthian" was often employed as an adjective for immoral and corrupt. In his two years living and preaching in Corinth, Paul came to know the city and its notoriety well.

Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians is a series of admonitions on living the moral and ethical dimensions of the Gospel he taught. In today's pericope, Paul exhorts Corinthian Christians not to fall back on their old ways. Remember, Paul writes, the dignity of the human body as "a temple of the Holy Spirit." Our "bodies" are not our own but "purchased" for us by God so that we may be reflections of his Spirit in our world (Corinth was a marketplace for the buying and selling of slaves, so Paul's "purchasing" metaphor would have been clear to his readers). God has a claim on them; their freedom was "bought" by Christ.

PROMPTS FOR HOMILISTS, CATECHISTS, AND RCIA TEAMS

Have you ever been the means of "inviting" someone to "behold" God's love in their lives? Has someone ever been an Andrew or John the Baptist for you?

When have you heard the voice of God inviting you to make a new beginning?

Think about ways in which God provides opportunities for new beginnings that overcome the pain of broken relationships or the trauma of change.

Where and when do we hear the voice of God calling us like the young Samuel to the work of the prophet?