

# Our Sunday Readings

## We're Listening

I SAMUEL 3:3b-10,19  
 PSALM 40:2,4,7-10  
 I CORINTHIANS 6:13c-15a,17-20  
 JOHN 1:35-42

### I SAMUEL 3:3b-10,19

#### **Reading closely**

1. How do you imagine Samuel's surroundings?
2. What kind of boy does Samuel seem to be?
3. What exactly do you imagine Samuel hearing?
4. What relationship do Samuel and Eli have?
5. Why might the LORD have chosen to speak to Samuel?
6. What all might Samuel feel as he speaks and listens to the LORD?
7. What might Samuel believe about the LORD?
8. What might Eli think about all of this?
9. How does Samuel's life change?

#### **Living the word**

10. Samuel was *not familiar with the LORD* (v.7). How well do you know God?
11. How are you like Samuel?
12. How are you like Eli?

*“Speak, LORD,  
 for your servant is listening.”*

### THE FIRST READING

#### **Dark times**

Although this story is set before the temple has been built, there is still a dedicated place of worship for the Israelites. It includes the *ark of God*, a large, ornate chest that holds the Ten Commandments.

Samuel is being raised by Eli, the priest and leader of Israel. At this time prophecy is rare (v.1), and Eli's sons, who will inherit Eli's duties, are immoral (2:12f). Eli himself is old and blind, though *not yet extinguished*, like the *lamp of God* that stands beside the ark (v.3a).

#### **Discerning the LORD**

During this dark time the LORD calls Samuel. The drama of the repeated call and response is a recurring motif of the Old Testament. God calls, but people don't easily hear or understand.

Samuel is too young and unfamiliar with God to know who is calling. He needs a mentor. Although Eli probably yearns to hear the LORD himself, the old man readily guides Samuel toward his new and important relationship with God.

**JOHN 1:35-42**

**Reading closely**

1. How might John the Baptist feel about redirecting his disciples?
2. How readily do the two disciples leave John?
3. Why do you think John’s disciples leave him to follow Jesus?
4. What might these two people expect of Jesus?
5. What all do you think they talk about during their first conversation with Jesus?
6. How do you imagine Jesus in this story?
7. Why do you think Andrew gets his brother?
8. What might Simon have been doing?
9. Why do you think Simon goes to meet Jesus?
10. How might Simon have reacted to getting a new name?
11. How might the others have reacted?

**Living the word**

12. Do you know what you’re looking for?
13. What do you want from Jesus?
14. How much time are you willing to spend with Jesus?
15. Who could you bring to Jesus, and how could you do it well?

**THE GOSPEL READING**

**Hearing from John’s Gospel**

Each liturgical year the Gospel passage for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time is from John. This Gospel is very different from the other three in both its chronology and in the way it portrays Jesus.

The reading for today transitions us from the Christmas season, with its readings that highlight Jesus’ divinity, back to Jesus’ ministry.

**From John to Jesus**

John the Baptist had his own disciples. Here John shows his subordination to Jesus by sending his disciples to follow *the Lamb of God*. This title, used only here and in the Book of Revelation, underscores the sacrificial aspect of Jesus’ ministry. The title alludes to the story of the Exodus (Exodus 12) and a passage about God’s “suffering servant” (Isaiah 53:6-10).

**What are you looking for?**

As John’s Gospel unfolds, Jesus will refer to himself as *living water, the bread of life, the light of the world, the good shepherd*, and so on. This Gospel presents Jesus as the answer to all that a person seeks. Thus the question that Jesus asks these two new disciples is the same question Jesus asks us: “*What are you looking for?*”

**Stay with Jesus**

John’s Gospel also emphasizes the necessity of *remaining or staying with Jesus*. *Staying with Jesus* means a person *believes* in Jesus, believes that he is water, bread, light – that is, eternal life. By staying with Jesus, the two disciples show that they believe Jesus is everything they seek.

**Andrew gets Simon**

With his newfound faith Andrew evangelizes his brother. By bringing Simon to Jesus, Andrew does what every true disciple should. Focus then returns to Jesus, whose knowledge of people and the future is the most pronounced in this Gospel. Jesus gives Simon a new name as a symbol of Simon’s new relationship with God and the special role this disciple will have.

**PRAYER**

*by St. Anselm of Canterbury*

O Lord, my God,  
 teach my heart this day  
 where and how to see you,  
 where and how to find you.  
 You have made me and remade me, and you have  
 bestowed on me all the good things I possess,  
 and still I do not know you.  
 I have not yet done that for which I was made.  
 Teach me to seek you,  
 for I cannot seek you unless you teach me,  
 or find you unless you show yourself to me.  
 Let me seek you in my desire;  
 let me desire you in my seeking.  
 Let me find you by loving you;  
 let me love you when I find you.  
 Amen.