

## **Speak, Lord, for Your Servant is Listening**

**1 Sam. 3: 3b-10, 19; 1 Cor. 6: 13c-15a, 17-20; Jn. 1: 35-42**

After almost a year of pandemic restrictions, the days of hanging out at the big shopping malls, like Yorkdale or the Eaton Centre, shopping (even if it was only window shopping at Louis Vuitton, Coach or Cartier), catching a movie, or having something to eat, are a distant memory. We would walk along and hear music coming out of the stores. There was so much competing noise that we had to listen very closely to pick out the songs, even our favourites.

Amid the noise of the world, we often have similar difficulties hearing God's voice when He calls to us. And His message may come to us when we least expect it.

In the First Reading for this Sunday, the Lord called to Samuel when he was lying down to sleep. God called once. He called again. Then, He called a third time. Each time Samuel thought that his teacher, Eli, was calling and each time Eli told Samuel that he was not. After the third time, Eli told Samuel that, if he heard the call again, he was to respond: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." God did call Samuel again and he replied just as Eli had instructed him. The Lord's call was gentle but firm and persistent and Samuel heard Him in the silence of the night, listened attentively, and then adopted an attitude of acceptance. He accepted God's call and God commissioned him to be a great prophet.

God called Samuel directly. But, in the case of Simon Peter, we read in the Gospel that Andrew, Simon's brother, a disciple of John the Baptist, was pointed toward Jesus by John. After spending some time with Him, Andrew, realizing that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, brought his brother to Him. Jesus gave Simon the name, Cephas or Peter (Petrus in Latin meaning the Rock). Eventually, Jesus told Peter that he would be the rock upon which Jesus would build His Church.

Unlike Samuel, Peter received his commission from God in a very indirect way, having been led to Jesus by his brother. Neither Samuel or Peter were expecting God's call but they listened and cooperated with God's plan for them.

Hearing God's call can be difficult; particularly in a world full of noise and distractions. But responding to His call can be even more difficult because it involves risk and most of us don't like risk. Usually, taking up a mission from God means that we have to leave our comfort zone. We have to put out into 'deep waters' and cast our nets in places where we've never been before. In a word, we are 'scared'.

But we should cooperate with God's call with full confidence that God will be with us all the way. Paul, in the Second Reading, tells us this: '...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?' Paul assures us that God has given us the Holy Spirit which dwells within us to strengthen us. And he says that we are not our own. We are to be servants of the Lord and He will help us carry out our mission. We read in the First Reading that the Lord was with the prophet Samuel and let none of his words fall to the ground.

So, during this time of greater isolation and silence due to the pandemic, let us listen attentively to God's message for each of us and open ourselves to cooperating with Him confidently knowing that: '...all things work together for good for those who love God'.