

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, 14 January 2024

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19; 1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20;  
John 1:35-42

## Homily

Christian life always begins with a call from God. The Bible gives us countless accounts of vocations.

John the Baptist makes way for Jesus, and he invites his disciples to follow the one whose path he has prepared. The first disciples came from John the Baptist's group. John recognizes Jesus as the "Lamb of God". The framework of Exodus, so present in this gospel, suggests the theme of liberation through death. The image of the lamb is an expression of this, but it also deals with a victorious lamb as he is presented in the book of Revelation. Therefore, the two disciples who follow Jesus are warned of the difficulties and risks of their option.

Jesus asks them: "What are you looking for?" This question seeks to specify the quality of the faith of the disciples who just arrived. They respond by calling him "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), and asking, "Where are you staying?" Their question seems to express a desire to share the life Jesus. Jesus' answer is also very concrete: "Come and see". Everything is taking place at the level of direct experience.

The one who inspires this account, John the evangelist, never forgot the hour of his encounter with Jesus: "It was about the tenth hour", or about four in the afternoon. Like every event that marks our lives, the remembrance of that encounter stays on with all its circumstantial details, leaving indelible imprints on our memories. The indication of a precise hour does not seem to have much significance for us. It would not matter if the text had said ten in the morning, or two in the afternoon. But it is not the case for those who have experienced the event. The text is the testimony of that event with a personal imprint. The apparent

insignificance of this detail contains a strong message. We all have our similar "four in the afternoon", our peak moments of encounter with the Lord. They sustain us in difficult moments.

The encounter with Jesus is not limited to these first disciples. The very nature of the event leads to communication. This kind of experience must be shared. Following Jesus is not an individual matter; it something that is done in community. The itinerary of the messianic people begins with a direct encounter with the Lord. This encounter takes place in community: "We have found the Messiah".

The book of Samuel offers a beautiful vocation account. Not understanding the call at the beginning, young Samuel is confused, and he thinks Eli is calling him. Finally, following the priest's advice, he recognizes the voice of the Lord and places himself at his service: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening". We have to be totally available because everything in us is part of the Lord's call. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

-end-