

Homily for the 2nd Sunday in Ord.
Jan. 17-18 2009 “B”

Most people these days have cell phones. I know this, because I hear them ring during Mass. That’s why we ask people to make sure their cell phones are turned off. If you are like my Mom and Dad, you have a cell phone that you never use, and if it rings, you don’t know how to answer it.

When a call comes in to my cell phone, I have a couple of options. If the call is from someone in my address book, the phone will show me the person’s name, so I can decide if I want to speak to that person.....or not. If the person making the call is not in my address book, the number will usually appear. Then I wonder if it’s from a sales person, and I have to decide whether or not to answer the call. It could be a long lost friend, or someone who has changed their number. At any rate, I can decide if I want to talk to the person or send them to voice mail.

We all receive calls from the Lord. Sometimes, like the disciples in the Gospel, we recognize the Lord’s call and follow. Other times we don’t recognize His call and can’t be bothered with answering. Many people today, when they recognize that it is God’s call, just send Him to voice mail. We might be afraid of what He is going to ask of us. He might demand something more than we want to do or give. Most often we’d rather deal with Him later. Maybe if we ignore the call enough, we won’t have to deal with it at all.

If we don't respond like Samuel in today's first reading, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening," we miss our opportunity to be His servant. Maybe the Lord wants us to lead someone who is estranged from Him closer to Him just by showing a little kindness. Maybe the Lord is calling us to embrace a way of life where we become His servant. God's call will always have an impact on our lives as well as on the lives of people we might not even know.

The readings today are a call from God to reflect on our response to Him. We are asked today to reflect on our Vocation. Usually people think of a vocation as something that Priests or Sisters have. These are certainly vocations from God, but they are not the only call that God gives people.

Many of you are married or are hoping to be married someday. How do you view marriage? If it is just a romantic relationship legalized by the state and celebrated in a Church? If that is your idea, then you are missing what is most important about the sacrament of marriage.

Marriage is a vocation, a call from God to greatness by embracing a life of sacrificial love. It is a call to be a servant of God. But the Sacrament of marriage takes two committed people. If you are married, your job is to give yourself to the other in love. Your call is to show the world the power of the sacrificial love that Jesus demonstrated in His life.

Husbands and wives also need to pray for each other. In marriage, it takes two of you to support each other in answering God's call. Young people think of love as a wonderful romantic whirlwind. You date this guy or this girl, and you look forward to a time when there will only be one person in your lives. This is all great. But do you ever pray for that person, even if you do not know who that person is yet? Do you ever pray that God help you recognize the person that you can best make a Christian life with?

Many are involved in careers. Why do you do what you do? To make money? That's OK, but if that is the goal of your lives, you certainly will have nothing to take with you. There is a reason why they don't put luggage racks on a hearse. Do you do what you do to support your family? That is a higher goal because sacrificial love will prepare you for the next life, and join you to the ones you are willing to make those sacrifices for.

John Henry Cardinal Newman was an intellectual who lived in England from 1801 to 1890. He dabbled with atheism early in his life, but his study of mankind and philosophy brought him to seek God in religion. He became a Christian and was baptized in the Anglican Church. As he studied more and more he discovered the teachings of the Catholic Church. He said that as he studied more and more about Catholicism, he realized that everything they said was true. He became a Catholic and eventually became a Roman Catholic priest, and later was even made a cardinal. Last April Pope Benedict XVI

announced that Cardinal Newman will be beatified sometime this year. Cardinal Newman wrote this beautiful reflection:

“God has created me for some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have a mission. I may never know exactly what that mission is in this life. I shall be told it in the next. I have a part in a great work. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing. I shall do good. I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, even if I do not realize what I am doing. But, if I keep His commandments, I will serve Him in my calling.”

That is a beautiful expression of what a Vocation is. Each of us has a vocation from God. It is our call from Him.

What is your calling? The answer to this question is simple: we are all called to serve God. The particular answer to this question is a mystery, the mystery of our lives. We pray today for the grace and courage to be attentive to God’s call in our lives. We pray for the courage to receive the Lord’s call throughout our lives, so that when He calls we will respond, “Speak Lord, your servant is listening.”