

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19 1 Corinthians 6:13-15 John 1:35-42

HOMILY

On a few funerals of grandparents, I have been very moved to hear grandchildren speak so lovingly of their grandparent. True, grandparents can make a unique contribution to the lives of their grandchildren: especially in the area of faith.

In today's first reading we hear of Eli and Samuel - of course, they were not related but the age gap between them was equivalent to that between a grandparent and his or her grandchild. Here we see how the elderly Eli has much to teach the young Samuel regarding the ways of God. God was trying to call Samuel name, **'Samuel, Samuel!'** but Samuel did not quite recognize who it was that was calling him. Instead, he thought that Eli was calling him. Eventually, Eli recognized that God was trying to communicate with Samuel. To help Samuel to hear the call of God Eli gave him a very simple prayer to say, **'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening'**. Having prayed that prayer, Samuel came to understand what God was asking of him. What Eli did for the young Samuel is what grandparents often do for their grandchildren. They give them the right words to communicate with God; they teach them prayers. Sometimes, the simplest and shortest prayers can be the most effective, like the simple, short prayer that Eli taught Samuel: **'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening'**. It is a prayer we need to pray often ourselves.

The message behind this is that none of us journeys to the Lord on our own; we need the support of other people of faith. Teachers as well have that role. The Lord draws us to himself in and through other people of faith. This is very pronounced in today's gospel reading. John the Baptist introduced two of his disciples to Jesus, saying to them, **'Look, there is the Lamb of God.'** And when the two disciples begin to follow Jesus, Jesus then begins to speak to them directly, **'What do you want?'** **'Come and see'**.

The Lord wants to speak to each one of us directly, but, do you know what? He often needs someone to firstly **pave the way**. Eli paved the way for God to engage and speak directly with Samuel. John the Baptist paved the way for Jesus to engage and speak directly with his disciples.

Having spent time with Jesus, Andrew paved the way for Jesus to engage and speak personally with Peter.

Today is a day to give thanks for all those Elis, all those John the Baptists, all those Andrews who have introduced us to the Lord. But let us not forget that each of us is called to bring others to the Lord, perhaps just one person. We don't have to be great missionaries to introduce someone to the Lord. Very often our own quiet and faithful witness to the Lord and his way of life will, in time, bear that rich fruit for others.