

# 2nd Sunday B

## What Are You Looking For?

In the days before GPS became common, it was said that men were more reluctant than women to ask for directions. It was said that men preferred to find a destination themselves rather than to stop and ask for help. Of course, brothers, this implies that our search didn't go too well, that we were hunched over the steering wheel looking for an elusive address on a mail box or a non-existent street sign.

If all of us find it difficult, even with assistance, to find a street sign or address, think of what an adventure it is to find God in our lives. Where does this adventure take us? And what does it require of us? This seems to be the question posed by today's Scripture readings and they offer us four lessons on looking for Jesus, on meeting him a deep and personal way, and in what happens to us when we do so. Let's begin with the Gospel reading from St. John.

## The Gospel Reading from John

In John's Gospel we meet John the Baptist once again. His whole life was dedicated to preparing the way for the coming of the Savior. So when he sees Jesus, he says to two of his disciples, "Look, there is the Lamb of God!" On the spot, John the Baptist lost those two disciples; they left him to follow Christ.

So John the Baptist gives us lesson number one in looking for Jesus. If we want to find Jesus, we have to prepare our hearts. We really won't look for him if our lives are completely oriented toward possessions, power, or pleasure. We won't really look for Jesus if we place ourselves ahead of Jesus and others. As John the Baptist said of Jesus, "He must increase, I must decrease."

But back to the Gospel which offers a second lesson on looking for Jesus. After John

the Baptist's disciples left him, they began to trail Jesus. Jesus noticed them, so he turned around and asked them, "What are you looking for?" Here Jesus wasn't offering to provide them with information or directions. Instead he was asking a most fundamental question: "What is the deepest desire of your heart? Where is your life headed?" The disciples sensed Jesus was asking them a deep question they weren't ready for, so they tried to get the conversation back to a more "normal" level. So they answered Jesus with a question: "Where are you staying?" Jesus, in turn, didn't give them an address but an invitation: "Come and see," he said. So here's lesson number two in looking for Jesus: Be prepared for an invitation to open your heart to him, an invitation that will correspond to the deepest desire of your heart not just to be loved, but to be loved infinitely, unfailingly, generously, even amid the cares, worries, and preoccupations of daily life, even amid all the terror, turmoil, and fear that is so much a part of everyone's life.

### **First Corinthians**

This brings us to the second reading from St. Paul and lesson number three in looking for Jesus: Our response to the Lord's invitation, "come and see," must be wholehearted. We won't really find Jesus until we need entrust our whole life to him by undergoing a complete conversion of life, a conversion that includes the mind, the heart, and even our bodies.

In First Corinthians St. Paul tells us that nothing is "off limits" if we would seek, find, and follow Jesus: "The body is not for immorality but for the Lord and the Lord is for the body," he writes, and he calls our bodies, "a temple of the Holy Spirit". Seeking, finding, and following Christ means bearing witness to his love, a self-giving love which excludes all forms of self-centeredness, including impurity and lust. In our day and age this is regarded as a difficult message but it is key to finding the freedom we need to open our hearts to that infinite and pure love which is revealed on the face of Jesus— that love for which our hearts are longing.

## Second Samuel

And finally, a word about Eli and Samuel in our first reading. Young Samuel woke up the elder Eli three times during the night because he thought that Eli had called him; in fact it was the Lord who had called. Indeed, Samuel was already staying with the Lord; he was sleeping in the temple. So it is Eli and Samuel, together with Andrew, Peter, & John from the Gospel who give us a final lesson on what happens when we look for the Lord, and it's this: The Lord will give us a mission, a vocation, a calling.

Eli who was a wise and holy man, realized this was happening to Samuel. So he told him that when the calls again, Samuel should say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening." Samuel did just that and was called by the Lord to be the judge over all of Israel. So too, Peter, Andrew, and John, whom we met in the Gospel, accepted the Lord's invitation, "Come and see." They stayed at the Lord's house, that is to say, the house of Mary, his Mother, and in her house they opened their heart to the Lord's call - "Follow me! Be my disciples! Be apostles, my closest followers!"

In this parish, young people are being called to priesthood and consecrated life and the Lord is calling many to enter the vocation of marriage and family life. He is saying, "Come and see," and like old Eli, I am saying to you, when the Lord calls you, when his call echoes in your hearts, there's only one right response: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening." And to those of us already called and already living vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life, and marriage, we need to hear the Lord calling us each day to rededicate ourselves to our vocations, for it is in faithfully living our specific vocation that we continue to seek Jesus' love more deeply and follow him more closely, so as to make him present in our world today.

In a few moments I shall elevate the consecrated Host and repeat the words of John the Baptist: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" May our lives express the amazement and joy of Andrew who said to his brother Simon, "We have found the Messiah!"