

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time B/2021[1]

Today I want to talk to you about the call to serve God. As a matter of fact, all of us are called by God to serve him, each according to his vocation and following the various circumstances of life. Some are called to be spouses, mothers and fathers of families. Others are called to be religious, men and women. Still others are called to live a particular way of life as priests.

From the point of the view of the call, we are all equal. No vocation is superior to another because they are all a response of faith to the bounty of God who wants us to work for him in the various capacities of life.

However, it is not always in a very direct way that God comes to us and makes his call to crystal clear. Sometimes God uses human mediation in order to reach out to us. The first reading of today shows how it was the discernment of Eli that allowed the young Samuel to realize that God was calling him. The stories I have heard from many priest are that it was at the suggestion of a parent, a relative or another priest that they entered the Seminary and became priest.

In my personal case, I remember the influence of one my teachers of second grade. That man, even if he is not canonized by the Church, is a saint. Every day, after the school, he had to bring us to the Church in order to say goodbye to Jesus. In the morning, we had to pass by the Church in order to greet Jesus. That atmosphere brought me to realize what my vocation should be and to value the priesthood. In the end, I made the decision to enter the Seminary.

I do not want to minimize other factors like the family or the parish in my decision. But today I want to highlight especially the mediation of that man who served as God's instrument in order to help me.

But, every vocation is like a fruit on a tree. The fruit should mature and become ripe otherwise nobody would like to eat it. I know that most of us are cradle Catholic. We have received faith as a tradition. Faith or baptism has been a matter of family and the fabric of what we have inherited. It has never been question of asking why do I do that, but rather that of why should I not do that.

In the light of today's Gospel, we have to ask the question of maturity. I want to put the question of maturity in terms of relationship with our Lord Jesus. The first level under which I want to examine this question is about the identity of the disciples called by Jesus.

Who are these men who have accepted the call of Jesus? They are very ordinary people, like you and me, apparently without any particular qualities that could distinguish them from others. The Gospel says that they were simple fishers. Though ordinary people, however, Jesus called them in order to do extraordinary things, that is, to be his coworkers and men who had to bring salvation to others.

In our various vocations, we are also called to become, each one in his own way, God's instrument for the salvation of our fellows. This task is so important that if our fellows come to lose their eternal salvation, while we had the possibility of showing them the way of God, we bear some responsibility. I am tempted to say that the last judgement will reserve us some surprises. We will be questioned about indifference toward our fellows as it was for the rich man toward the poor Lazarus.

Moreover, if the disciples called by Jesus are just ordinary people, it means that what counts is not who they are, but what they will become by being his companions. That is the case for each one of us. We should never be afraid because of our sinfulness or weaknesses. Jesus can transform us; he can make us valiant people, from sinners we can become saints. With Jesus, everything is possible and nothing is impossible. We have to trust him and work with him for the salvation of our fellows.

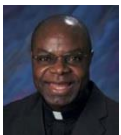
The second level under which I want to examine the question of relationship is that of commitment. As I said most of us are cradle catholic. We have inherited Catholic faith by tradition through our families. Being cradle catholic is not, however, the same thing than having personal relationship with Jesus. This question of relationship is very important today. Relationship is always a matter of adult commitment. It is something that involves our minds, hearts and souls. It requires the strength of the will: I want to stay in this relationship. There might be discouraging thing happening to me, but I stay here because it is a commitment I have made.

As I say this, I remember a lady who was telling me that if she would have listened to her mother she would have divorced long time ago. But, she did not; she stayed in; she committed to do everything in her power so that her marriage stands and it worked.

Of course, a commitment does not just come suddenly. Like any business of relationship, it is built over time. It is a process of knowing who we are and who our partner is. Jesus calls us to start a relationship with him, to become his disciples. This is a process that will lead us to discover that he is truly the source of our life.

Like the first disciples, Jesus is calling us to start a process of discipleship: "Come and see". Today is the time to renew our commitment or to start one if we never thought about it. Having received faith from our family is a very good thing, but today we have to make it a commitment and a voluntary choice. Today we are called to make it an adult relationship and to revive our life of prayer, love and charity. God bless you all!

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



Homily Date: January 17, 2021
© 2021– Fr Felicien I. Mbala, PhD, STD
Contact: www.mbala.org
Document Name: 20210117homily.pdf