



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
January 18th, 2015

Introduction to the Word:

Last week, we began by looking at a faith based “Pursuit of Happiness”. We discerned together that - **HAPPINESS IS SOMETHING RECEIVED NOT ACHIEVED.** Last week’s Gospel for the Baptism of the Lord had us hear an important voice from heaven breath something into creation which is life impacting. The Gospel writer says “a voice from heaven was heard saying “*You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.*” In this we were reminded that **HAPPINESS IS A HORRIBLE GOAL BUT A WONDERFUL GIFT OFFERED TO US BY GOD.** There is a terrible battle in this world that says that Happiness is the goal; that if we earn the respect of people - we will be happy, that if we obtain a standard of living - we will be happy, that if we have enough power, get all the possession, live with prestige - we will be happy. Yet God gives life, God gives happiness, God gives eternal success - its not a goal it’s a gift - and this is why we are His beloved Children!

In these next few weeks we will discern this together in a series called “Pursuit of Happiness.” This week we are given three keys to being disposed to receiving this happiness from God.

Today's readings show the diverse ways in which the call to discipleship can come. Young Samuel (1st reading) has a direct experience of God and, with the help of a more experienced companion, is able to understand what God is asking. In the Gospel, the call comes through the mediation of another's witness. In whatever way the call to discipleship comes, Paul reminds (2nd reading) us that we do not encounter the Holy as disembodied spirits. Rather, our bodies are sacred, "temples of the Holy Spirit." That Jesus took on human flesh, and that God raised Him bodily.

Warm-up Activity (about 8-10 minutes):

In your response to Jesus’ question “*What are you looking for?*” lies the unfolding story of our Christian life and response to Happiness. Talk about your own “pursuit”. Name something about your Christian life that you find arduous and adventurous? We began the year looking at the phrase “YOU BEFORE ME.” How is living that going?

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in
name of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*



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SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)

FIRST READING (1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19)

Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, “Samuel! Samuel!” and he said, “Here I am!” Samuel ran to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But Eli said, “I did not call: lie down again.” So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, “Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son: lie down again.” Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down: and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20)

Brothers and sisters: The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (John 1:35-42)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

John was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah.” He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Peter. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)



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COMMENTARY:

The pursuit of Happiness begins with the Pursuit of God because **HAPPINESS IS SOMETHING RECEIVED NOT ACHIEVED**

The first reading is a simple and moving story about discipleship from the First Book of Samuel. It describes how a vocation (including a call to Happiness in life) unfolds: God always takes the initiative. The call, as with young Samuel, is felt as a kind of mysterious urging coming from the depths of the heart. Samuel can hear the call because of his welcoming disposition: “*Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.*”

Samuel’s words “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening” also express a fundamental attitude of the soul which is really intent on communicating with God, knowing, through faith, that God wants to communicate with us.

The author of today’s Gospel continues the same theme, laying out in just a few dramatic lines the scene depicting the progress of Christian discipleship, a message that Mark and Matthew and Luke needed a whole Gospel to describe. Two of John the Baptist’s disciples respond to his prompting as he points out the Messiah with “*Behold the Lamb of God.*” Immediately they take their leave of him and follow Jesus. Jesus eventually sees them, turns and asks simply “*What are you looking for?*”

In this brief exchange lies the unfolding story of our Christian lives, a story that will be defined by the values and choices we make even as we live out this very day which help us discover three keys to being Disciples who wish to receive Happiness:

1. Openness: “Here I am Lord”. Are we disposed to the paths of Happiness God wishes for us? They might be different than what we think will bring us happiness. There may be less power, position, prestige, opportunity. Are we willing to walk His way to happiness?

2. Opportunity: The disciples’ response—“*Where are you staying?*”—is not so much seeking information about Jesus’ physical dwelling place as it is asking something like “*Where do you hang out? Where can we find you?*” Understood this way, Jesus’ invitation and response, “*Come, and you will see,*” takes on a depth of meaning surely intended by the author, for the deepest kind of *seeing* is seeing with the eyes of faith. *What do you want? Where do you live? Come and see!* Are we willing to go and spend time with the Lord – to give Him the opportunity through our Disciplined prayer – to desire to become like Him?

3. Invitation: In today’s Gospel John the Baptist brings Andrew and another unnamed disciple to Jesus. Andrew then brings his brother Simon Peter to Jesus. Later, Philip brings Nathaniel to Jesus. Happiness is received when we share it. Do we share our faith? Do we bring others to Jesus? Are we willing to invite others to hear the good news of what Christ does in our life? Are we open to inviting others to come to Mass with us?



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To pray in front of them at a meal? To gently pray with or for them in the midst of them telling us their story?

Andrew inherited Happiness - when he told his brother about Jesus - and brought St Peter to Jesus - and that changed the world! Happiness is not found in the comfort zone of just getting up, but in the end zone of Openness, Opportunity and Invitation. This week are you will to continue to pursuit Happiness and receive it, not achieve it?

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion: (15-20 minutes)

1. *“What are you looking for? (1 John 1:36)*

When we read this question in its Gospel context it seems to hold worlds of meaning. It expresses a depth of longing to be close to Jesus, to be allowed to stay there all day, the “rest of the day.” Put yourselves *into the Gospel story* along with the other disciples present. After a brief pause, take turns responding as best you can to this question from the context of your own life stories and situations. This is a bit of a challenge but is well worth the effort. So, what are you looking for? What will lead you to happiness?

2. What is your response to the following statement and how do you think it affects the path of Happiness which we receive:

God has plans for each of us, even as God had plans for Samuel and the apostles. It is up to us to be attentive to God’s calling and action in our lives. It is up to us to listen and say “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening”.

Closing Prayer (15-20 minutes)

(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. The intent is to “outreach” to the larger community.)

GROUP PRAYER COMMITMENT: / GROUP ACTION:

1. Take five minutes at the end of the day this week to review the many encounters you engaged in that day. Try to discern which of these might have represented the voice of the Lord. A clue: the situations we engage in that are most frustrating for us are more than likely those connected with God’s presence and Spirit and demand our special attention.

**With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God’s favours on us today, we pray
OUR FATHER ...**

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