

Homily for January 19, 2003
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle B

By Father Charles Bowes

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

Just how up close and personal we are with Jesus determines the energy to share our faith.

There's a big difference in the way folks follow Jesus in John's gospel compared to the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. In those gospels, Jesus calls people and they follow him; it is a matter of a simple invitation to follow.

But in John's gospel it's much more personal – it's a matter of inquiry on the part of those who are curious, on the part of those who are seeking something more. In fact, Jesus asks the question, according to John's gospel, "What are you looking for?" That's the same question Jesus addresses to each of us: What are you looking for? What brings you here to Mass today? What is your greatest need, your greatest longing, fear, desire? When questions like that are put to us, suddenly God and the experience of Jesus become quite personal, real, of the moment. This personal inquiry, beginning with our own place or need, is only half the story. The other side of the dynamic of meeting and following Jesus is that the effort to seek help or find solutions to our needs compels us to share this good news, this Messiah, this savior. In other words, if Jesus is a personal savior for you and for me, we will just naturally share that

peace and that insight with the world we touch. Such faith will then form our actions, our prayer, our entertainment, our leisure, our love.

This weekend we have three opportunities to respond personally to God's invitation through Jesus. The first is that in the not-too-distant future we shall be receiving from Rome through our Archbishop some new guidelines for our prayer at Mass – nothing startling or earth-shaking, but opportunities for deepening and expanding our experience of Catholic prayer. To lay the groundwork for that, beginning this weekend during Ordinary Time and during Lent, I'll be modifying the amount of the Eucharistic prayer I chant. This will provide some contrast with the seasons and allow fuller, more conscious, and more active participation. Feedback from our parish planning process gives encouragement to this flexibility as well.

Secondly, in the bulletin this weekend appears this insert, which is a statement by the priests of the Archdiocese describing the shortage of priests we face and asking for prayer, understanding, and participation as we begin dialogs about our future. I learned only last week that this spring, we should have about ten parishes needing pastors and only about six priests available to send to them. The bulletin insert contains the text the priests wrote and an executive summary

prepared by one of our parishioners which is being widely used throughout the Archdiocese to clarify what we face and its implications. I'm proud to say our parish is ahead of the game with our planning process underway, and we need the input of as many who can participate for our parish convocation to take place in March. There'll be more about this in the time ahead, but for now, please take a look at this and join in prayer and dialog as the opportunity presents itself.

Thirdly, this week is also the anniversary of the Roe versus Wade pro-abortion decision of our Supreme Court. It provides an opportunity to re-affirm the Catholic Church's pro-life position, which defends all life from cradle to grave and the church's opposition to abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment. But the Church is not merely opposed to what threatens life. Rather, the Church has inaugurated programs that help women and men heal the pain and alienation, to help folks accept God's love and forgive themselves in the face of difficult life decisions. We're privileged to have a parishioner engaged in promoting this healing and help who would like to share that Catholic vision with us:
Ms. Lorraine Muldoon.