

Vocations Sunday

Readings: Sunday 12th May 2019

First Reading: Acts 4:8-12

You have been filled with the Holy Spirit! Just as the first Christians were given new life and energy to know what God wanted of them, you have received this same gift of God's help through the Holy Spirit to know what God is inviting you to do.

Praying in the Name of Jesus brought healing to a man who couldn't walk. God knows your name and just like the first disciples, he is calling to you by name: we just have to try to listen to his voice and it is hearing his voice that can make us whole.

Jesus is called a stone that was rejected, but he was shown to be the one on whom everything was built. God doesn't depend on any of us, he is the foundation! But he asks us to follow him in a particular way, that no one else can do, just like a uniquely carved stone that fits perfectly into the whole building making it strong and beautiful, and without us, it would be not complete, lacking something.

Psalm: 117 (118) 1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28-29

The psalmist rejoices that God has answered his prayer. Perhaps you might feel that God isn't being clear enough in calling you, that he isn't direct enough in answering your prayer for guidance. Keep going! God gives us freedom to choose how to serve him: often our talents, gifts, abilities are hidden or subtle signs from God as to what we should do.

Through your vocation you can become a real blessing to others: a sign of God's presence in the world and a mark of his blessing, as the psalm says 'Blessed in the name of the Lord is he who comes'.

God's love has no end: don't worry about getting it 'wrong' or thinking God is calling you to one thing and then you end up doing something else. God loves us too much to deny us absolute freedom: in your vocation, if you desire to do the will of God, you will end up doing the will of God!

Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-2

Our first vocation is to know that we are children of God. What an amazing calling! Everything begins there and ends there: we come from God and we are going to God. In between, the life God gives us, is to find our true self in God, to love others as he commands, and to serve God in the best way we can as our own particular path or journey to heaven. That is what a vocation is!

The world offers us so much: money, prestige, pleasure, success, but true and lasting happiness is always found in God. We can always have more money, greater fame, more thrilling pleasures, increased success, but God is the only one who has infinite possibilities for us, an inexhaustible treasure that is for us, for free, forever!

'What we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed.' The past is in God's mercy, the future is in God's Providence, but what we do have is now. Tell God your dreams, what you hope for from the future. It is true, we do not know what lies ahead, but with God the future can only ever be blessed.



Homily Notes: Vocations Sunday 2019

How can we be an Emmaus Church for young people who are looking to find their way in the world? Last year's Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment reminded us that we are each called to holiness, lived out through our vocations. The inspiration for the final document is drawn from the story of the disciples on road to Emmaus, a wonderfully human story of accompaniment in loss, revelation of hope, and joy in finding their call.

This Vocations or Good Shepherd Sunday there is a twofold invitation and challenge for us as the people of God. Firstly, from the findings of the Synod it is clear the world over, "young people have asked for an authentic, luminous, transparent and joyful Church: only a Church of saints can live up to these demands! Many of them have left the Church because they have not found holiness there, but rather mediocrity, arrogance, division, and corruption" (*No 166 published in America 27/10/18*).

This resonates with Pope Francis' vision of an authentic Church, meeting the needs of the world, especially young people. In a time when opinion has supplanted fact, there is a need for people to preach and witness to truth. As a part of the family of God we need to exemplify the values of our faith, but in humility and compassion. It is interesting to note in a recent talk with young people in discernment for the priesthood and religious life, none had proposed themselves as candidates. They believed themselves to be not good enough. In each case, it was only after the encouragement of fellow parishioners and friends that they were able to take that first crucial step. We are called to foster and raise up such men and women with the capacity to be good shepherds not just now, but anticipating the needs of our Church into the future.

Secondly, for our discerners now is the time we need your vision and joy, your faith and hope. It is not difficult to see that as a Church we have had something of a Passion experience in recent years. It is understandable that, like the two disciples leaving Jerusalem, people have left with a feeling of loss and confusion. However, we have a God who walks with you, who accompanies you on the way, and who challenges you to see the movement of the Spirit in our world. We pray that through the experience of the Sacraments, times of prayer, the gift of the Church, and the beauty of the world, you will encounter God calling you beyond your greatest expectations. We pray that your hearts will be on fire through the celebration of our faith, the sharing of hope, and the living out the example of Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, there is a lot of work for love to do.

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