

# FROM THE DESK OF

## Fr. Julius

Brothers and Sisters in Christ; Grace and peace!



After completing the cluster of celebrations since the Nativity of Our Lord, culminating with the Feast of Epiphany and the Baptism of Jesus last Sunday, we have been gifted with still another form of manifestation of our Lord today. In this second Sunday in Ordinary Time, the liturgy depicts how it is God who personally invites and reveals Himself to individuals from Eli, to Samuel, to Jesus' first disciples.

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God,

In our First Reading, Eli, who is the temple priest and spiritual mentor, helps the young Samuel recognize his authentic calling from the Lord. This comes at a time of prophetic drought, and yet Samuel goes on to become the last Judge and the first Prophet of Israel. An interesting note: Eli and his sons had been in disfavor with God, and in fact rejected by God. But we observe another act of God's Mercy in Eli's recognition that God had favored and called Samuel. In our next reading, St. Paul, intent on teaching his infant church at Corinth an appropriate morality, refers to various struggles occurring within our physical body. Sometimes read at weddings, we grasp St. Paul's stance – that our bodies are all temples of the Holy Spirit; therefore, our bodies are to be conformed to the Lord, protected from wrongdoing, since we *"have been purchased at a price."*

Although the Gospel at first glance appears understated, in fact so many vital events occur in quick succession, laying out the remarkable evangelization of the first four disciples. For the first disciple Andrew, it was a true and personal epiphany: "We have found the Messiah." None of the early disciples could contain their excitement. Each one in turn is compelled to go and find a friend or brother and share this great news; Philip finds Nathaniel, Andrew tells Simon. We can see a shift from the role of the Baptist onto the new Rabbi. This holy invitation from Jesus to *'come and you will see...* opened up a new interior fervor.

Many of the disciples had informal encounters like those being invited to *'leave their nets and follow him,'* but eventually they would have the zeal for the kingdom. The disciples were likely older than the young Samuel in the first reading. However, God has no age limits – he can, and does, engender child saints – and the wise priest Eli does not attempt to impose anything on Samuel once he realizes it was God calling. Thus, he gives the best counsel one can offer a young person: When God speaks, answer with total readiness! *Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.* This reinforces the need for one to be affiliated with a good Spiritual Director.

According to the Council Fathers, every Christian – clergy, religious, and laity – are called to listen and follow the God of Love, who in His Mercy invites us daily and asks us to invite others to Him, and especially *back* to Him. Have you ever had the good fortune to introduce anyone to Jesus?

Happy Sunday!