2nd Sunday Of Ordinary Time, Year C

Hannah, who had been barren, begged God for a son and promised to give him to the Lord. Her prayer was answered and after the child, Samuel, was weaned, she presented him in the temple and left him there in the care of Eli, the priest. The situation in Israel was bleak. There had been no prophet to speak for the Lord since the time of Moses. The priests were corrupt and it was into this terrible state of affairs that the call comes to a young boy, not a wise and experienced sage.

1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19

3. Samuel was sleeping in the temple Perhaps the reason that Samuel slept in the temple was to enable him to tend the lamp that burned there throughout the night. Where The Ark of the Covenant was a small portable box about 3ft. 9in. by 2 ft. 3 in. that contained the stone tablets of the Law, a specimen of manna and the rod of Aaron. The Ark symbolized the presence of God. The Catechism has an interesting comment on prayer from this selection: "The prayer of the People of God flourishes in the shadow of God's dwelling place, first the ark of the covenant and later the Temple. At first the leaders of the people—the shepherds and the prophets—teach them to pray. The infant Samuel must have learned from his mother Hannah how 'to stand before the Lord' and from the priest Eli how to listen to his word: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'"

4. The Lord called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am."

5. Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to sleep." So he went back to sleep. Though influential in the community because he was the priest serving the ark of the covenant, Eli was not a strong leader and his sons were evil.

6. Again the Lord called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called me." But Eli answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep."

7. At that time Samuel was not familiar with the Lord Because "Samuel was not familiar with the Lord," he did not arrive at the right response easily. This is the drama of every vocation. The call is issued over and over, and the response each time becomes gradually more honest and sincere, more faithful, less confused because the Lord had not revealed anything to him as yet.

8. The Lord called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me." Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the youth.

9. So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" When Samuel went to sleep in his place,

10. the Lord came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening." The theme of today's reading is found in this verse: we have the clear obligation to LISTEN which will enable us to truly hear the word of the Lord. At this time Samuel is specifically being called to deliver a prophetic message to Eli that his family is to be punished for its blasphemies in the service of the temple.(1 Sam 3:15-18) Samuel was also to serve God by anointing of the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David.

19. Samuel grew up, and the Lord was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect. Young Samuel is destined to be the great judge, priest, prophet, and nazirite (one who took ascetical vows in ancient Israel) who shepherded Israel into the next phase of its history as a nation.

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

The author of this letter is the apostle Paul. First Corinthians is one of the earliest books of the New Testament, written by the apostle to the community at Corinth in about the year 56. Corinth was the largest, most cosmopolitan, and most decadent city in Greece. "To act like a Corinthian" was an ancient saying meaning debauchery, especially prostitution. Men went to Corinth to take a moral holiday. By contrast Paul calls for the hard, distinctive way of living the life of Christ in a Christless world. He expresses this very clearly in verse 9: "Do not deceive yourselves: no fornicators, idolaters, or adulterers, no sexual perverts, thieves, misers, or drunkards, no slanderers or robbers will inherit God's kingdom."
Brothers and sisters: In this first letter to the Corinthians, Paul deals with three moral issues: incest, lawsuits among Christians and our selection, which is about sexual immorality. Through all of these issues, the most unifying theme is that Christians must be different.

13. The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body;
Everything we do must be an expression of our dignity and holiness. There is no separation between the body and the soul for every part of us is infused with God's Spirit. Our very flesh and blood give glory to God. In other words, we cannot commit sin with our bodies without affecting our souls.
14. God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. The Corinthians thought that sexuality was an area of no rights nor wrongs, just a pure bodily function, but Paul set them straight based on his respect for the body's sacredness because THE BODY WILL BE REUNITED WITH THE SOUL to share in its eternal destiny. Sins against the body, like fornication, are not evil because sexuality is evil but because our bodies are holy!
15. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? This is Paul's first use of the image of the Church as the Body of Christ. Because our bodies are members of Christ, the Church is a visible reality in this world. The malice of fornication lies in uniting the members of Christ in an intimate relationship with a harlot. Sexual immorality is as terrible as to hack oneself off from the body of Christ, to become one body with a prostitute. Hence the gravity of this sin, a sin against one's own body, which is part of the mystical body of Christ. The dignity of our bodies is clear because OF THEIR HEAVENLY DESTINY. Unlike anything else on this earth, our bodies, like that of Christ, will be glorified by God to participate in the life of Heaven.
17. But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one Spirit with him.
18. Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. Spelled out, this means that we should avoid having any sexual relations with ANYONE outside of marriage and ONLY with our spouses when married. Paul is saying NO fornication, NO homosexual acts, NO adultery and we should avoid anything that would lead us in that direction. The Catechism says that "All Christ's faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life." This means that the priesthood and religious life require a celibate chastity and marriage calls for chaste fidelity to one's spouse.
19. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, God dwells in the soul through grace, as in a temple. The sexual sins such as homosexuality, fornication, prostitution and adultery are sins against the HOME of the Holy Spirit! As St. Leo said, "Do

not think of turning out so noble a guest by evil deeds!" whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?
20. For you have been purchased at a price. Christ bought us at a terrible price! Therefore, we no longer belong to ourselves or to sin or to the devil! Paul is emphasizing that Christians are God's property, his precious possession, his people whom he has united to himself in a new covenant that was effectively sealed by the sacrifice of his Son on Calvary. Therefore glorify God in your body. St. John Mary Vianney preached that a Christian has all kinds of resources he can use to practice chastity: 1) BE VERY VIGILANT ABOUT WHAT WE LOOK AT AND WHAT WE THINK AND SAY AND DO. 2) HAVE RECOURSE TO PRAYER. 3) FREQUENT THE SACRAMENTS WORTHILY. 4) FLY FROM ANYTHING THAT MIGHT TEMPT US TO SIN. 5) HAVE GREAT DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. St. Thomas Aquinas commented: "One does not win by putting up resistance because the more one thinks about it, the more influenced one becomes; one wins by FLEEING, by avoiding unclean thoughts completely and by avoiding all OCCASIONS OF SIN." The Catechism also mentions pornography as a GRAVE OFFENSE because it perverts the intimate giving of spouses to each other and it does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others.

John 1:35-42

John is believed to have written his Gospel later than the others, probably in the 90's. His account is a work of mature reflection and insight by a theological genius and Saint. Every incident discloses layers of symbolic meaning which John is likely to have gleaned from his recollections of and meditation upon the fact of his life with Jesus. This scene takes place shortly after John had baptized Jesus and seen the Spirit descend upon him.

35. John (This was John the Baptist) was standing with two of his disciples, Only in the Gospel of John do we learn that Jesus' first disciples had originally been disciples of the Baptist. One of these is identified as Andrew in verse 40 and the other is probably John the evangelist himself.
36. and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The gospel writer makes clear the role of John the Baptist: he is to point toward the "Lamb of God." This title reminds us of the sacrificial lamb, the suffering servant of God and even the good shepherd. The title of lamb is applied to Jesus 28 times in Revelations where he is the sacrificial victim (which is the basis of his glorification), where he is enthroned and glorified, victorious in war, and the judge who has the book of life.
37. The two disciples heard what he said Notice that the disciples do not initiate the dialogue. and followed Jesus. It is probable that all 12 of the Apostles were originally among John's disciples.
38. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" This same phrase was used for many centuries when inquirers into religious life presented themselves for admittance before the gate of a monastery or convent to determine in a formal way whether or not the applicant was serious about pursuing a monastic vocation.

Jesus asks the same question of his first two vocations; "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi"—which translated means Teacher—This was a common title given to a recognized teacher. The disciples are acknowledging that Jesus has the answers and not they. "Where are you staying?" This is a loaded question which means: where can we spend time in your company, where is lasting peace, where is the answer to life's most perplexing questions?

39. He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

40. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. Andrew is mentioned 12 times in the Bible, but he is almost always identified as "Simon Peter's brother." When Andrew was martyred, he hung upside down for two days while he continued to preach and encourage those who watched. He is the patron saint of Scotland and his symbol is a cross shaped like an X. The bones of the saint are now enshrined in Amalfi, Italy, and since ancient times they have produced a mysterious oil on January 28 and sometimes on other feast days as well. Sometimes there is only a little and other times it flows down the aisle. Many miracles have been associated with this phenomenon which has been collected at various times of the year, is not fixed to a liturgical rite, and has occurred in three countries which have housed the bones: Greece, Turkey and Italy.

41. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah"—which is translated Christ. "Messiah" is a rendering of the Hebrew word for "Anointed One". This title is rendered into Greek as Christ. We often think of Christ as Jesus' middle name but the people at the time knew that it meant Jesus "the Anointed One" or Jesus "the Christ".

42. Then he brought him to Jesus. Andrew was the first missionary for the Christian message. Having found the Messiah himself, his immediate and natural response was to find someone else with whom to share his discovery. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas"—which is translated Peter. The man who became the first Pope was named Simon by his parents. Jesus gave him a new name, Cephas, which was the Aramaic word for "sizeable rock." This term was not generally used as a personal name before Jesus renamed Simon. The name Peter is the Greek equivalent. Peter now stands in the biblical tradition where new names signify new God-given roles in salvation history as when God renamed Abram as Abraham and Jacob as Israel. In Peter's case, Jesus designates him the foundation stone of the New Covenant Church. Just as the Temples of the OT were built upon a great stone, so Jesus builds his NT Church upon the foundational rock of Peter. From here on, whenever he is called "Simon" in the Gospels, it is a reminder of his uninspired and unregenerate humanity; for example, when he was sleeping in the garden, Our Blessed Lord addressed him: "Asleep, Simon?"

Some of the material for this commentary was taken from: (1) The Commentary Notes of Tim Gray, (2) "Workbook for lectors and gospel readers" by Aelred R. Rosser, (3) "Catechism Of The Catholic Church," (4) "The Jerome Biblical Commentary," (5) "Workbook for lectors and gospel readers" by Martin Connell, (6) "Workbook For Lectors And Gospel Readers" by Graziano Marcheschi, (7) "The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study" by Deacon Ken & Marie Finn, (8) "You Can Understand The Bible" by Peter Kreeft, (9) "The Navarre Bible: Corinthians", (10) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Gospel of JOHN" With Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn

and Curtis Mitch, (11) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Gospel of MATTHEW" With Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (12) "The Twelve: The Lives Of The Apostles After Calvary" by C. Bernard Ruffin, (13) "Relics" by Joan Carroll Cruz, (14) "Catholic Bible Study: John 1:1-51" by Stephen K. Ray, (15) "Life of Christ" by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, (16) "Dictionary of the Bible" by John L. McKenzie, S.J., and (17) "workbook for lectors and gospel readers: 2009" by Mary A. Ehle.

In loving memory of Peg Schneller, who compiled these commentaries.