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"Come and see" (John 1:39).

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Sam 3:3b-10, 19; Ps 40; 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20; John 1:35-42

A common rule for writers, especially journalists, is “Show, don’t tell.” John’s Gospel, the most theological of the four, nonetheless displays a mastery for describing the spiritual connections between Jesus and his disciples with simple yet potent verbs. In today’s Gospel, we see emphasis on these verbs: John the Baptist points to Jesus as the “Lamb of God.” His two disciples *hear* this and *follow* Jesus, who asks, “What are you *looking* for?” They say, “Where are you *staying*?” Jesus says, “*Come* and *see*” They *stay* with him. Jesus *looks at* Simon, renames him Peter.

Hearing, following, seeing and *staying* with Jesus are what happen when Jesus *looks at* you, His look of love is his call. He sees who you really are, and his love empowers you to become that person. This is what happens in love songs. “I saw you standing there.” Turn around, look at me.” “The first time ever I saw your face.” In that moment, our life changes. We are known, called, named, and we want to remain in this love.

“Jubilation,” a song by Harry Chapin in the stage production of the “Cotton Patch Gospels” captures the thrill of the disciples: “Everybody wants to touch their dream just one time. I know I’ll never ever get this close again. Everybody wants to feel that feeling one time. That’s why I don’t want this day to come to an end.” The lyrics interweave with the Great Commandment of love, and we know we are hearing the Gospel as the love song it is. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-IKEgx0NrU>

Today’s first reading about the call of the boy Samuel perfectly describes the mystery of vocation. He is awakened from sleep by a voice calling his name. He is not yet familiar with the Lord, and three times goes to his master, Eli, saying “Here I am. You called me.” He is sent back to his bed and when called again he responds as instructed, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

A vocation is built into every life, and happy are those who hear the voice early and respond generously. It may not seem like a spiritual experience at all, just the desire to be ourselves, find happiness in using all our gifts. Or we are awakened gradually and repeatedly until we realize that God is calling us by name. It is never too late. The night vigils many older people experience, when prayer is all they have, may be the first time some realize that God has been calling them all their lives. St. Augustine confessed, “Lord, late have I loved thee.”

This week takes us into Ordinary Time with events like the Dr Martin Luther King Jr holiday and the inauguration that are anything but ordinary but only highlight the need to take up our call and respond to the many challenges our world is facing. I recommend Mary McGlone's "Scripture for Life" column on the NCR site as a road map to discipleship. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/scripture-life/second-sunday-ordinary-time-vocation-love>