



Bible Study 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time Year A

St. Maria Goretti and
St. Peter Claver
Parishes

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“As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, ‘Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ At once they left their nets and followed him.” Matt. 4:18-20

Reading I: Isaiah 8:23-9:3

HE IS CALLING YOU! The following words from the Negro Spiritual capture the theme of this week’s readings:

*Hush, hush, somebody's callin' my name
Hush, hush, somebody's callin' my name
Hush, hush, somebody's callin' my name
Oh my Lord, oh my Lord, what shall I do?*

These words describe the tension of hearing someone calling you and deciding whether to respond. They describe the hesitancy that we all feel in following the call of Jesus into new and unfamiliar places that test our faith. As Christians, we should always know what to do when Jesus calls us to serve others. We must answer the call and follow Him.

The first reading from Isaiah called the



HE IS CALLING YOU!

oppressed people of Israel from the dark days of submission into the light of the glory of the Messianic days that were yet to come. The region around the Sea of Galilee that had been settled by the Hebrew Tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali was overrun by the Assyrians who settled there around 733-734 B.C. (vv. 1-4). Under foreign rule, the Chosen People had lost their ability to worship freely and lived under the boot of a pagan power. The land had become a melting pot and home to many Gentiles, as well as Jews. This integration of cultures was caused by the international highway between Mesopotamia and Egypt that passed through the area. The Chosen People walked in the darkness of pagan rule. The darkness refers to the chastisement of God. The light represents deliverance and its effects, brought about by a conquering Davidic king. (See vv. 3-6). Isaiah called the Chosen People into the light of a new relationship with God. The joy they experienced would be like the joy of Gideon’s victory over Midian (Judges Chapters 6-8), when the Lord delivered Israel from an oppressive foreign invader. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** How do you deal with depression? Where do you find relief?

ZEBULUN - CALLED OUT OF DARKNESS

ZEBULUN [ZEBB you lun] (dwelling) – Is the name of a man and the territory inhabited by the tribe of Zebulun in the Old Testament:

1. The tenth of Jacob's 12 sons; the sixth and last son of Leah (Gen 30:19-20; 35:23; 1 Chron 2:1). Zebulun had three sons: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel (Gen 46:14; Num 26:26-27). These are the only details about Zebulun that appear in the Bible.

2. The territory in which the tribe of Zebulun lived. The land allotted to Zebulun after the conquest of Canaan was bounded by Issachar and Manasseh on the south, by Asher on the west, and by Naphtali on the north and east (Josh 19:10-16,27,34). Zebulun was fertile. It included part of the mountainous area of lower Galilee and the northwest corner of the fertile Plain of Esdraelon (Valley of Jezreel). (From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers).

Comment: *The presence of so many Gentiles may have given the Jews the impression that the inhabitants dwelled in spiritual darkness. The “Light of the World” came into that darkness.*

Reading II: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

HE IS CALLING YOU! In this letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul explains to the Corinthians that it was Jesus that called them. He appeals for unity in Jesus Christ. Quarrels had arisen in the Body of Christ regarding the teachings of the Gospel, perhaps from the arrival of converts from outside of Corinth. Apollos, an Alexandrian Jewish convert, was an elegant preacher had attracted many followers. Others arriving from Palestine declared their loyalty to St. Peter (Cephas), while others preferred St. Paul. (vv. 10-17)

But St. Paul condemned such fractured perceptions. He called for agreement, “a mending of the nets” (Mk. 1:19). He reminded them that they were not called by preaching, but by Jesus Christ. Jesus is calling you as well. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What does it mean to be spiritual? What is your source of spirituality?

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

He IS CALLING YOU! The second verse of the Negro Spiritual, *Somebody's Callin' Mah Name*, reveals the joyous moment when a person realizes who is calling them. There is a sense of relief. There is the tension of dismay. There is the moment of indecision and discernment.

*"Sounds like Jesus, somebody's calling my name
Sounds like Jesus, somebody's calling my name
Sounds like Jesus, somebody's calling my name
Oh my Lord, Oh my Lord what shall I do, what shall I do?"*

The last line still contains the tension of indecision; *"Oh my Lord what shall I do?"* The answer lies in the Gospel and in the examples of the first disciples. Drop everything and follow Him.

Matthew's Gospel in Chapter 4, verse 12 says that when Jesus heard that John was arrested, He left Nazareth and went to Galilee. John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament Prophets, was arrested and imprisoned by Herod and would be put to death. In a way, this event may have been the call for Jesus to begin His ministry. John had decreased in death. Now He, the Son of Man, must increase.

Jesus heard the call and began His ministry in Galilee of the Nations. This is the same area of Palestine referenced in the first reading. Matthew incorporates the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1 in Matthew 4:15. It is to the once depressed tribal territories of Zebulun and Naphtali that Jesus the Christ will begin His ministry.

Note that He preached *"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near,"* in a place populated by descendents of the Assyrian, Grecian, Roman, Babylonian and Persian conquerors (v. 17). What He meant was that the building of the Kingdom of God on earth had already begun. It is in this area, near the international highway by the Sea of Galilee that He called His first disciples. He first called Peter and Andrew, brothers, while they were fishing (v. 18). He called them in their profession to win souls for the Kingdom of God. What was their response? They dropped everything and followed Jesus. He called them to the ministry of gathering.

He called James and John mending their father, Zebedee's nets. They also followed Him. Note that He called them while they were mending nets. This may be a metaphor for the ministry of problem solving in the Body of Christ, as was St. Paul's function in 1 Corinthians referenced in the Second Reading. Peter, Andrew, James, John and Paul heard "someone" calling their names. They answered immediately. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** What have you been called to do? Do you have to be reminded of your calling? How quickly to you respond to God's call to serve other?

Pray About it!

Monday

Read Matthew 9:1-2; Have you been called to heal the broken hearted?

Tuesday

Read Matthew 4:18-20. Recruit someone to serve others with you.

Wednesday

Attend Mass and receive the Eucharist.

Thursday

Read Matthew: 4:21. Repair a broken relation with an apology.

Friday

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. Today be a mediator. Help someone resolve a dispute.

"Letter from a Birmingham Jail Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."

16 April 1963

In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Resources: The Sunday Readings Cycle A Kevin O'Sullivan, O. F. M. Franciscan Press, Quincy University, Quincy, Ill. pp. 78-84; Matthew, Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., pp. 688-869; Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year A 2014, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.N.D. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 48-54; http://www.gospelongslyrics.org/songs/hush_hush_somebodys_callin_mah_name.html#sthash.pSfP6ynN.dpuf

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2017