

2nd Ordinary Sunday
January 17, 2021
“God-Guided Decisions”

1 Sam 3:3...19
1 Cor 6:13...20
Jn 1:35-42

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

How do we know what is the right thing to do in every situation? How do we make the right choices and the right decisions? How do we know what is truly best for our children and young people? These questions are probably more critical today than ever before, as we face life in a polarized society and in a bankrupt culture.

Obviously, we must never do deliberate harm to another. Likewise, it is important to protect from harm those for whom we are responsible. Nevertheless, we cannot always know what is truly best for our children and loved ones in the matter of equally good life and vocational choices. We cannot foresee what the future will bring to our own lives or to the lives of those we love.

However, what we can do is develop our relationship with God – We can turn to God when faced with any important choice or decision – And we can learn to be open to discover whatever God will say to us: in the depth of our heart, in the silence of the night, and in the “Kairos” – the important moment – of our lives!

God came to the boy, Samuel, as a wake-up call in the middle of the night. Eli and his sons were in disfavor with God and had been rejected by God. Eli had failed to correct his sons in the failure of their priestly duties and vocation – as well as in their licentious abuse of women. However, Eli understood that God had favored and called Samuel. He told the boy to listen and to respond to whatever the Lord asked. For his part, Samuel became one of the great prophets of the Old Testament. He was always able to make the right decision and able to point others in the direction of what was right and good and just.

Jesus came into the world to be the example, “par excellence”, of how we should listen to God, direct our own lives, and call others to better things. John the Baptist was able to point out Jesus – And Jesus welcomed Andrew, Peter, and the other disciple into a new circle of followers. Somehow, God pointed each of those first disciples toward Jesus – And Jesus accepted them as called by his Father.

Most of the non-retired clergy in our own diocese are not native-born. Most are generous men who have come from other countries. They have answered God's call to serve in America today.

Sadly, priestly and religious vocations are diminished in most of the Western World. I believe that this is due to our pagan, secular society and to our bankrupt culture. Power, wealth, and sex are the gods worshipped by the Western World. Many parents believe that the world offers much more for their children than God can give them. Having few children themselves, their sons and daughters can't bring grandchildren into the world if they are priests and religious!

Moreover, how can children and young people today hear the voice and the call of God – addicted as we are to cellphones, video, and virtual reality games? How can they opt for celibacy and virginity when the culture and the media eroticize so much? How can they make a permanent commitment – even to marriage – when casual one-night stands require no work or emotional involvement? Even living together circumvents permanent commitment!

Today, St. Paul tells us to shun all erotic immorality. Our bodies are members of Christ! Our bodies are dwelling places – temples, really – of the Holy Spirit! Do we dare to use this member of Christ and temple of the Spirit in ways that God never intended? The same is true for anyone who espouses the LGBTQ approach to God's sacred gift of sexuality!

Brothers and Sisters, God speaks to us, just like He spoke to Samuel, the Baptist, the disciples, and to Jesus himself long ago. Sometimes it is a voice in our heart or mind – or as an intimation we feel somehow in some other way – Sometimes it is in a wake-up call at 2AM – with a caution or even a foreboding – Sometimes it is in the voices of our parents – or even in the voices of our children. What is important is that we listen – that we hear – and that we ask God what we should do!

Let us pray, today, that we always turn to God in the decisions we make, and that we, likewise, respond to whatever He asks of us!

Amen.

January 17, 2021

Msgr. Russell G. Terra