

Gospel: John 1: 35 - 42 Jesus Calls His first Disciples

First Reading: 1 Samuel: 3-10

God calls Samuel, who answers, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians: 6-13

We are reminded that we are temples of the Holy Spirit and that we have been purchased at a price. The price? The life of the Son of God.

Gospel: John 1:41

John the Baptist pointed at Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God."

Two disciples of John followed Jesus. He turned and said to them "What are you looking for? They answered, "where are you staying?"

Jesus said, "Come, and you will see." Then two more left what they were doing and followed Jesus.

That was two thousand years ago.

Times were not good then, just as today.

Those who should have followed Jesus, for instance, the temple leaders, those who knew the prophecies, did not follow Him, it would upset their status quo, so they plotted against Him.

Eleven of the twelve apostles suffered terrible torture and death. Only St. John wasn't martyred, but he was boiled in oil. He was saved by God because He had more to do.

A multitude of Jesus' followers for the next 250 years were martyred and the blood of the martyrs fed the Church.

Now, 2000 years later we are being called by Jesus to follow Him.

Just like the time of the Apostles, following Jesus is dangerous.

The "World" is Evil! And following Jesus is more dangerous all the time.

Why does God allow evil?

Because we can't love God, we can't give ourselves to God and love one another without Free Will.

But, as all know that with Free Will, choosing not to Love God or neighbor is an inherent possibility.

Choosing self, seeking power over others, seeking fame and money, killings, stealing, lying are possible.

Every crime imaginable and every sin is possible.

And with Original Sin tainting our objectivity, every evil and every sin is committed.

And as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine say, "Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good, a greater good, out of evil."

This is part of the infinite goodness of God, that He should allow evil to exist and out of it produce good. The clearest example of this is the crucifixion of Christ, the most evil deed ever done, the murder of God. And out of this greatest evil came the greatest good, our salvation.

Every tragedy can also bring a greater good.

When we suffer, when we endure, when we love others, even difficult ones, we have an opportunity to

love as God loves. Look at some of the Saints:

St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Therese the Little Flower; there are thousands whose sufferings brought a greater good. Look even among yourselves.

These days are difficult, we all know that, and they are getting more difficult.

We see evil everywhere, and it appears set to win.

Don't believe it; it will not win, but we will suffer.

Remember the words of Fr. Ratzinger in 1969: "The Church will be much smaller...

[full text:]

The future of the Church can and will issue from those whose roots are deep and who live from the pure fullness of their faith. It will not issue from those who accommodate themselves merely to the passing moment or from those who merely criticize others and assume that they themselves are infallible measuring rods; nor will it issue from those who take the easier road, who sidestep the passion of faith, declaring false and obsolete, tyrannous and legalistic, all that makes demands upon men, that hurts them and compels them to sacrifice themselves. To put this more positively: The future of the Church, once again as always, will be reshaped by saints, by men, that is, whose minds probe deeper than the slogans of the day, who see more than others see, because their lives embrace a wider reality. Unselfishness, which makes men free, is attained only through the patience of small daily acts of self-denial. By this daily passion, which alone reveals to a man in how many ways he is enslaved by his own ego, by this daily passion and by it alone, a man's eyes are slowly opened. He sees only to the extent that he has lived and suffered. If today we are scarcely able any longer to become aware of God, that is because we find it so easy to evade ourselves, to flee from the depths of our being by means of the narcotic of some pleasure or other. Thus our own interior depths remain closed to us. If it is true that a man can see only with his heart, then how blind we are!

1. *"How does all this affect the problem we are examining? It means that the big talk of those who prophesy a Church without God and without faith is all empty chatter. We have no need of a Church that celebrates the cult of action in political prayers. It is utterly superfluous. Therefore, it will destroy itself. What will remain is the Church of Jesus Christ, the Church that believes in the God who has become man and promises us life beyond death. The kind of priest who is no more than a social worker can be replaced by the psychotherapist and other specialists; but the priest who is no specialist, who does not stand on the [sidelines], watching the game, giving official advice, but in the name of God places himself at the disposal of man, who is beside them in their sorrows, in their joys, in their hope and in their fear, such a priest will certainly be needed in the future.*

"Let us go a step farther. From the crisis of today the Church of tomorrow will emerge — a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning. She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so it will lose many of her social privileges. In contrast to an earlier age, it will be seen much more as a voluntary society, entered only by free decision. As a small society, it will make much bigger demands on the initiative of her individual members. Undoubtedly it will discover new forms of ministry and will ordain to the priesthood approved Christians who pursue some profession. In many smaller congregations or in self-contained social groups, pastoral care will normally be provided in this fashion. Along-side this, the full-time ministry of the priesthood will be indispensable as formerly. But in all of the changes at which one

might guess, the Church will find her essence afresh and with full conviction in that which was always at her center: faith in the triune God, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, in the presence of the Spirit until the end of the world. In faith and prayer she will again recognize the sacraments as the worship of God and not as a subject for liturgical scholarship.

“The Church will be a more spiritual Church, not presuming upon a political mandate, flirting as little with the Left as with the Right. It will be hard going for the Church, for the process of crystallization and clarification will cost her much valuable energy. It will make her poor and cause her to become the Church of the meek. The process will be all the more arduous, for sectarian narrow-mindedness as well as pompous self-will will have to be shed. One may predict that all of this will take time. The process will be long and wearisome as was the road from the false progressivism on the eve of the French Revolution — when a bishop might be thought smart if he made fun of dogmas and even insinuated that the existence of God was by no means certain — to the renewal of the nineteenth century. But when the trial of this sifting is past, a great power will flow from a more spiritualized and simplified Church. Men in a totally planned world will find themselves unspeakably lonely. If they have completely lost sight of God, they will feel the whole horror of their poverty. Then they will discover the little flock of believers as something wholly new. They will discover it as a hope that is meant for them, an answer for which they have always been searching in secret.

“And so it seems certain to me that the Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals. But I am equally certain about what will remain at the end: not the Church of the political cult, which is dead already, but the Church of faith. It may well no longer be the dominant social power to the extent that she was until recently; but it will enjoy a fresh blossoming and be seen as man’s home, where he will find life and hope beyond death.

Remember the words of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, now St. Pope John Paul II. (In an address given during that 1976 Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia for the bicentennial celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence), Cardinal Karol Wojtyla spoke some words which I believe were prophetic “We are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has ever gone through. I do not think that wide circles of the American society or wide circle of the Christian community realized this fully. We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel. This confrontation lies within the plans of Divine Providence. ...

A Prophecy by St. Pope Paul VI - 1975

“Because I love you, I want to show you what I am doing in the world today. I want to prepare you for what is to come. Days of darkness are coming on the world, days of tribulation. ... Buildings that are now standing will not be standing. Supports that are there for my people now will not be there. I want you to be prepared, my people, to know only me and to cleave to me and to have me in a way deeper than ever before. I will lead you into the desert ... I will strip you of everything that you are depending on now, so you depend just on me. A time of darkness is coming on the world, but a time of glory is coming for my church, a time of glory is coming for my people. I will pour out on you all the gifts of my spirit. I will prepare you for spiritual combat; I will prepare you for a time of evangelism that the world has never seen. ... And when you have nothing but me, you will have everything: land, fields, homes, and brothers and sisters and love and joy and peace more than ever before. Be ready my people, I want to prepare you.”

St. Pope Paul VI said again in 1976: “I speak to you of the dawn of a “new age” for my church. I speak to

you of a day that has not been seen before. . . . Prepare yourselves for the action that I begin now, because things that you see around you will change; the combat that you must enter now is different; it is new. You need wisdom from me that you do not yet have. You need the power of my Holy Spirit in a way that you have not possessed it; you need an understanding of my will and of the ways that I work that you do not yet have.

Open your eyes, open your hearts to prepare yourselves for me and for the day that I have now begun. My church will be different; my people will be different; difficulties and trials will come upon you. The comfort that you know now will be far from you, but the comfort that you will have is the comfort of my Holy Spirit. They will send for you, to take your life, but I will support you. Come to me. Band yourselves together, around me. Prepare, for I proclaim a new day, a day of victory and of triumph for your God. Behold, it is begun.

1975: Fr. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R. President of St. Francis University. Steubenville, Ohio

Son of man, do you see that city going bankrupt? Are you willing to see all your cities going bankrupt? Are you willing to see the bankruptcy of the whole economic system you rely on now so that all money is worthless and cannot support you? Son of man, do you see the crime and lawlessness in your city streets, and towns, and institutions? **Are you willing to see no law, no order, no protection for you except that which I myself will give you?** Son of man, do you see the country which you love and which you are now celebrating—a country's history that you look back on with nostalgia? Are you willing to see no country—no country to call your own except those I give you as my body? Will you let me bring you life in my body and only there? Son of man, do you see those churches which you can go to so easily now? Are you ready to see them with bars across their doors, with doors nailed shut? **Are you ready to base your life only on me** and not on any particular structure? Are you ready to depend only on me and not on all the institutions of schools and parishes that you are working so hard to foster? Son of man, I call you to be ready for that. That is what I am telling you about. The structures are falling and changing—it is not for you to know the details now—but **do not rely on them as you have been.** I want you to make a deeper commitment to one another. I want you to trust one another, to build an interdependence that is based on my Spirit. It is an interdependence that is no luxury. It is absolute necessity for those who will base their lives on me and not the structures from a pagan world. I have spoken and it will take place. My word will go forth to my people. They may hear and they may not—and I will respond accordingly—but this is my word. Look about you son of man. **When you see it all shut down, when you see everything removed which has been taken for granted, and when you are prepared to live without these things, then you will know what I am making ready.**

Several years later, in 1980, Fr. Scanlan prophesied again:

The Lord God says: "Hear my word. The time that has been marked by my blessings and gifts is being replaced now by the period to be marked by my judgment and purification. What I have not accomplished by blessings and gifts, I will accomplish by judgment and purification. My people, my church is desperately in need of this judgment. They have continued in an adulterous relationship with the spirit of the world. They are not only infected with sin, but they teach sin, pamper sin, embrace sin, dismiss sin. . . . Leadership unable to handle it . . . fragmentation, confusion throughout the ranks . . . Satan goes where he will and infects who he will. He has free access throughout my people and I will not stand for this.

My people specially blessed in this renewal are more under the spirit of the world than they are under the Spirit of my baptism. They are more determined with fear for what others will think of them, fears of failure and rejection in the world, loss of respect by neighbors and superiors and those around them, than they are determined by fear of me and fear of infidelity to my word. Therefore your situation is very, very weak. Your power is so limited. You cannot be considered at this point in the center of the

battle and the conflict that is going on. So this time is now come upon all of you—a time of judgment and purification. Sin will be called sin. Satan will be unmasked. Fidelity will be held up for what it is and should be. My faithful servants will be seen and will come together. They will not be many in number. It will be a difficult and necessary time. There will be collapse, difficulties throughout the world but—more to the issue—there will be purification and persecution among my people. You will have to choose what word you will follow and who you will respect. And in that choice what has not been accomplished by the time of blessing and gifts will be accomplished. What has not been accomplished in the baptism and the flooding of gifts of my Spirit will be accomplished in a baptism of fire. The fire will move among you and it will burn out what is chaff. The fire will move among you individually, corporately, in groups, and around the world. I will not tolerate the situation that is going on. I will not tolerate the mixture and the adulterous treating of gifts and graces and blessing with infidelity, sin, and prostitution. My time is now among you. What you need to do is to come before me in total submission to my word, in total submission to my plan. In the total submission of this hour, what you need to do is to drop the things that are your own, the things of the past. What you need to do is to see yourselves and those whom you have responsibility for in light of this hour and judgment and purification. You need to see them in that way and do for them what will best help them to stand strong and be among my faithful servants. For there will be casualties. It will not be easy, but it is necessary. It is necessary that my people be in fact my people, that my church be in fact my church and that my Spirit in fact bring forth the purity of life, purity and fidelity to the Gospel.”

In my reading of history, especially the last 150 years, evil always destroys itself, always implodes upon itself, but it also causes tremendous damage.

And while it rages,

- ◆ we must be strong
- ◆ we must be faithful
- ◆ keep faith and hope
- ◆ trust in God’s Divine Providence
- ◆ trust in His Mercy
- ◆ trust in His Love
- ◆ trust in Our Lady’s Protection
- ◆ Pray, pray the rosary and do Penance
- ◆ Love one another and pray for those who do evil
- ◆ and ask for the gift of Peace in your hearts.
- ◆ Now let us turn our attention to God’s presence among us at the Altar and take Him home with us.