

From the Desk of Our Pastor ...

YOU CAN DO HARD THINGS: Answering God's Call to be Missionary Disciples "Here I Am"



We are now in our second week of our 6 week homily series, "You Can Do Hard Things!" Last Sunday we launched the series off with the Baptism of our Lord, linking His baptism with ours, empowering us with the same Holy Spirit Jesus experienced so that we can do what Jesus does, hard things! Our punch line was, "Become what you are!" That is, we are configured at our baptism to do hard things, and our one single focus in life is to become and grow into what we already are. Specifically, this means becoming missionary disciples, seeing what Jesus sees (the needs of the multitudes), and then doing what Jesus does (the impossible; that which is above and beyond our natural powers). We gave you homework to do: revisit the baptismal vows that bound you to Christ and His Church, for this is where it all begins.

This Sunday we take the next step further into our quest. We must present ourselves to the Lord. Our refrain in our Psalm is "Here I am, Lord." In our first reading we find Samuel as a boy encountering God in the stillness of the night. At first he believes the voice he is hearing is Eli's, the High Priest, and he responds, "Here I am." When he realizes that it is God he is encountering, he responds, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening." As Hanna gifted her son Samuel to God in gratitude, so your parents gifted you to the Lord in baptism. Like Samuel, we must present ourselves to the Lord; make space in our busy world to hear Him speak our name in the stillness. We must be ready with "here I am; speak Lord, for I am listening."

In our Gospel reading we find two disciples of John the Baptist. That they were disciples of John tells us a whole lot: they were serious about presenting themselves to the Lord. John encouraged them to leave him and join up with Jesus. A sweet encounter ensues where Jesus looks back at them as they were following and asks, "What are you looking for?" This question is the first words out of Jesus' mouth in the Gospel, and certainly links to the first words spoken by God to humanity in Genesis; "Where are you?" There we see God in search of humanity; here we see humanity in search of God. The disciples seem a bit shy and perhaps awkward to Jesus' question, and ask, "Where are you staying?" Jesus simply replies, "Come and see." They were blessed to hang out with Jesus, where they were positioned to see the world as Jesus saw, and do what Jesus did by example.

This invitation is extended to us now. It can be ours for the taking. Both the boy Samuel and these two disciples exemplify for us the posture by which we can advance in our calling to become what we are: missionary disciples. We must present ourselves to the Lord. So this week, we challenge you to say to Jesus, "Here I am" in one of three practical ways. First, come to our "Together in Prayer" on Friday evening, January 22 at 7:00, and present yourself to God. Second, come to our adoration chapel and silently present yourself to God for an hour or so. Third, create your own little home altar in a quiet corner of your home with two candles, an open Bible, or perhaps an icon or other sacred symbols. We cannot "create" or self-manufacture divine encounters, but we can present ourselves before the Lord like the boy Samuel and the two disciples.

Father John Worgul
Pastor