

JANUARY 12, 2022
Memorial of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, Virgin
Mark 1: 29-39

“LORD, YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING.”

God calls us in different ways. Different ways but one and the same purpose: to make God known and proclaim the Good News of salvation. In our first reading we heard the call of Samuel. According to tradition, the call of Samuel happened when he was twelve years old or older, and he was serving the priest Eli in the sanctuary of Shiloh. He was called by the Lord three times and only on the fourth time that Eli realized God is the one calling Samuel. Eli instructed Samuel to say: ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’ From that moment, Samuel was anointed prophet of the people Israel. The Lord was with him, and God spoke to the people through Samuel’s words throughout the country from Dan to Beersheba, from north to south. People regarded him as a prophet of the Lord.

My sisters and brothers, there are two reflections our first reading is giving us. First “we might ask ourselves how often has the Lord called us and we have mistaken it for something else or not heard it at all? Yet, through people and experiences in our daily life, God is constantly calling us to His love and service and to come close to Him. Let us be alert this day to any calls He may make. Second, by our baptism we, too, are in a special way called to be prophets, that is, to be bearers of the Gospel message through our words and actions. How will people come to know Christ and the Gospel if not through us?”¹ Samuel is a young boy, but his age does not hinder him to be a great prophet of his time. He surrendered himself to the Lord and the Lord took care of everything.

Our gospel is the continuation of yesterday’s gospel wherein Jesus went to Capernaum and preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath. There He expelled from a

¹ livingspace.sacredspace.ie

man the unclean spirit and Jesus' fame spread throughout the country. We heard in our gospel today that Jesus and the disciples went directly to the house of Simon and Andrew "as it was the Sabbath, people could not go very far or do anything which could be labelled 'work'. In the house Jesus finds Peter's mother-in-law confined to bed because of a fever. When he is told about it, he immediately goes to see her, takes her by the hand, lifts her up and heals her. Immediately, she gets up and begins to serve them. In the evening, once the Sabbath was over, people were free to move around. So large numbers come seeking out Jesus to be healed of their sicknesses and to be freed from the power of evil spirits."² We can see here that Jesus obeyed the Sabbath day not an ultimate requirement to prevent doing good things. We must not prohibit ourselves to do good things everyday even on Sundays. After all His works at Capernaum and surrounding area, Jesus got up early in the morning to pray and the disciples look for Him, but He said that they need to go other towns and villages to proclaim the good news of salvation.

My sisters and brothers, Jesus is teaching us that "we do need to be available to all those who are in genuine need. At the same time, there is what we might call the 'poverty of availability'. No matter how generous and self-giving we are we can only give so much. We need to find a balance between people's needs and our limited resources. We do not help people by working ourselves to the point of 'burnout'. We also need 'quality time' to be with God, to pray and to reflect on our priorities. Jesus gives us an excellent example here."³

Let us reflect therefore our mission and works for the Lord. It is not our knowledge, capacity, age, color, or race that is important to the Lord but our willingness and openness to His will like Samuel. Be aware of God's call to us through other people and experiences. God speaks to us through this. We can really hear His voice in prayer. Devote ample time to pray and when we pray, listen to Him. In prayer, we are not the only talking, God also

² livingspace.sacredspace.ie

³ *ibid*

talk so we need to be silent to hear His words. We ask the intercession of St. Marguerite that we too may listen to the voice and call of God to serve and bring to the poor the marvelous love of God through good words and deeds. May St. Marguerite intercede for us as we do the mission of love despite of difficulties and hardship. At the end, God will triumph by using us. What is my mission today? Is that for my husband, my wife, my children, my companions? Is it in my workplace, my community, my neighbors? Are kind words or a smile I need to communicate to give joy and lighten the day of others? In the silence of our hearts, let us ask the Lord and say to our Master: 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'