

World Day of Prayer for Vocations – May 11/12, 2019

First Reading: Acts 13.14, 43-52

Second Reading: Revelation 7.9, 14b-17

Gospel: John 10.27-30

Today on this World Day of Prayer for Vocations and the 4th Sunday of Easter our Gospel is very short as Jesus speaks about his sheep – Jesus knows them and they know Jesus. He is speaking of relationship. When Jesus said: ‘I and the Father are one,’ he was moving in the world of personal relationship and it is this which he shares with us – it is this we are invited to join in – a personal relationship with Jesus and the world.

Jesus speaks to us today in his own voice using words like shepherd and sheep; he is not quoting scripture but stating who he is – this is his voice. He speaks of how he and the Father are one and then invites us to enter into relationship with him just as he is with the Father.

This is what vocation, a call from God looks like. More than a job or career it’s the relationship that we have with God and then with all those around us.

We heard in the first reading what Paul and Barnabas were responding to what the Lord told them: “I have set you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.” Paul and Barnabas responding with their lives and entering into a new relationship with Jesus and with the rest of the world.

I mentioned earlier that Jesus was responding using his own voice – he was stating who he was and how he was living. I think maybe that is what we do when we respond to God’s invitation – our lived response is our voice which speaks more loudly sometimes than any words we might offer. Our relationships of love speak volumes.

John Shea focuses on us finding our own voice which might be slow and tentative at first and only as time progresses do we find ownership in our voice that God has given to us, called us to live. He tells us an old Jewish spiritual teaching story: “When Rabbi Zusya grew old and knew that his time on earth was nearing a close, his students gathered around him. One of them asked him if he was afraid of dying. “I am afraid of what God will ask of me,” the Rabbi said. “What will he ask you?” “He will not ask me, ‘Zusya, why were you not like Moses?’ He will ask me, ‘Zusya, why were you not Zusya?”

God calls us, speaks to us, leads, holds, guides and invites us to be who we have been created to be – ourselves. That is our vocation – that is what the Church prays for today - that we all hear God call our name. It’s a one step-at-a-time, one day-at-a-time. To be mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers; doctors, lawyers, teachers, waiters, sales persons, carpenters, priests, religious... It’s not so much of the ‘what we do’ but how we do it.

Sometimes God speaks to us – whispers directly in our hearts but at other times God uses us as his instruments, as his voice.

God does not just call us once and then walk away – we hear Him during the course of our life-long journey. I am called to be a Lay Oblate Associate and member of the Mazenodian Family. It is most perfect for me and I love who I am called to be, and how I am called to live. It is from this way of being, seeing life through this lens that I respond to God’s invitation. Each of us are invited to be as God creates us – that is what is perfect for each one of us.

Joe Gunn – a member of St. Joe's wrote a short reflection for today's scripture readings in this month's copy of Living with Christ". In it he poses a question that we might all ask ourselves: "how can I respond to the loving call of the Good Shepherd?"

How do we respond to the loving call of the Good Shepherd?

We respond from the heart as we continue to hear God whisper our names. We need only listen – to our spouses, our parents and our children, our colleagues and students; to patients we might be caring for or lawyers who might be guiding us; our friends, any and all that we come together and meet with. It is not what we do, but rather "how" we do.

I am blessed every single weekend to come to St. Joe's to share in the liturgy with all and each of you. You are God's instruments – we are God's instruments with and to each other. You – we - are the light that has been set for the world.

If is for this that I give thanks and I celebrate with you.