



Archdiocese of San Antonio
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It is very easy sometimes to forget what it is to be Christian. In our lives faith gets reduced to following the rules the Church gives us, or praying before meals and before going to bed. We ask God to help us when times are hard, or we try and be nice to those around us. However, being a Christian is more than this. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, “Christianity is not a new philosophy or new morality. We are Christians only if we encounter Christ... Only in this personal relationship with Christ, only in this encounter with the Risen One do we really become Christians” (Vatican City, Sept. 3, 2008). The scriptures from today’s Liturgy of the Word challenge us to remember precisely this truth.

In the Gospel of John we hear the beautiful story of the calling of the first Apostles. John the Baptist points out the Lord to his disciples in those words that we proclaim at mass right before we receive Communion: “Behold, the Lamb of God” (John 1:36). John gives his friends the chance to have an encounter with Jesus. They start to follow after Jesus, and then are asked a very simple, but powerful, question: “What are you looking for?” This question may have many answers in our lives. “I’m looking for peace, or stability, or hope, or assurance, or happiness, or success, or love.” We are always looking for the answer to life. But hear the answer that St. Andrew and the other disciple give to Jesus: “Rabbi, where are you staying?” What a beautiful answer! They want nothing more than to know where the Lord is living. They want to know how to find the Lord and how to “stay” with Him. This is what our Holy Father was

talking about. It is not about our goals, or thoughts, or notions, or wills. It is about Jesus, and an experience of his very life; it is about staying with Jesus.

Now, this is all very nice to say, but *how* do we get there? How do we find that place in our lives where we can stay with Jesus? Here is where our Savior really calls us to deeper faith. He tells the disciples, "Come, and you will see." He is saying, "Follow me, and you will find out." Now, put yourself in the disciples' shoes for a second, and imagine that you had never heard of Jesus before, that you had no idea who he was. Your mentor points him out to you and tells you to go to him. Then, this stranger tells you to trust him, just follow him and find out what comes next. No questions asked, just a simple "Come, and you will see." This is the faith that Jesus is asking of those who would follow him. We do not know at first all that walking with him involves, or what it really means to stay with Jesus. We are first asked only to "come and see."

The prophet Samuel had a similar experience of the Lord, as we hear in our first reading today. He is sleeping in God's temple, and he hears this voice calling to him. He has no clue what is going on; he even thinks that it is his master Eli calling him. So he goes to Eli and says, "Here I am. You called me" (1 Sm. 3:5). You see he trusts Eli; he knows that Eli has his best interest at heart. So, without asking "What do you want?" or "Why did you call me?" Samuel presents himself and simply says "Here I am." Eventually, Eli helps him to know that it is God calling, and Eli brings Samuel to the point where he can say with faith: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening" (3:10).

So, this is the challenge God gives us today. He sees us here, coming before him, seeking that answer to life we have always sought. He asks us, "What are you looking for?" Our answer is, "You, Lord. We are looking for a life with you." And, for this reason we call ourselves Christians. But Christ also asks us to "come" and "see" where his is leading us. Hopefully, we will answer with faith "Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will (Ps. 40). Lead me."

This, of course, is the hard part. How much do we trust God? Do you believe that God has your best interest at heart? No one else can answer this question for you, but you. It is a decision you have to make, to have faith in God's call, his plan, his

vocation for your life of holiness. The Church calls us to answer with hope! Pope Francis reminds us of this when at a general audience in October he said: “Christian hope is our joyful expectation of the Lord’s coming and the fulfilment of his saving plan for the human family. In every generation the Church holds high the lamp of this hope before the world. Today let us ask whether our own lamps are alight with the oil of faith, and to what extent we live as credible and joy-filled witnesses to our hope in God’s promises” (Oct. 15, 2014).

All of you here, listen to the lesson God has for us. How do we, every day, answer Jesus’ invitation to “come and see” where he dwells, following him in hope? So often we forget this challenge, and we just live out our lives day to day without growing deeper in the love of Jesus. We lose ourselves in distractions or in those immoralities and sins that separate us from the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 6). Remember my sisters and brothers that we are in Christ now, we are members of his Body. Jesus lives here in our midst. May we “glorify God” in our bodies and in our lives. Hope in God’s plan in your life, live every day with Jesus, in his Will and in his Love. May every day be an answer to his invitation, so that all of us, the whole Body of Christ may say with faith:

“Here I am Lord, I come do to you will.”