

Homily for the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

I'm preaching today to all of you. But really, I am preaching to the young men and women of our parish. I am speaking to you who are in high school and college. I am speaking to you who are young adults and who are beginning to make your way into the world.

I am speaking to you today because I think these readings are about you. They are wonderful readings that place before you serious issues and ask equally serious questions.

I begin with St. Paul who charges his readers not to use their bodies for immorality. In his wisdom, St. Paul instructs us to be conscious of the fact that our bodies are a gift...more than that they are a gateway to the world. It is through our bodies that we enjoy this precious gift of life that we hold so dear. It is through our bodies that we interact with others. It is through our bodies that we build our futures. And so St. Paul is pleading with his listeners, he's pleading with all of us, to treasure our bodies, to honor our bodies, to not use our bodies foolishly but to realize the great gift they are.

St. Paul's instructions though are only a prelude to the deeper message that is present in these readings. Consider Jesus' question in the Gospel: "What are you looking for?" Jesus is asking each and every one

of you that question. But I think, more than anyone, Jesus is asking that question to you who stand on the threshold of your adult lives. See, what we look for determines the path we follow. And sometimes in a world that is itself so confused, it is very challenging to figure out what you want and where you are to go.

I think that all of us spend our lives scratching our heads and trying to figure out what we're looking for. Sometimes it changes as we age. But in the first steps of adult life the question can be at its most important. For at this moment the choices that we make thrust us into the future in more ways than we can imagine.

It is in attempting to answer that question of what we are looking for, that we need to be conscious of what the prophet Samuel learned in today's first reading. As a youth, as a teenager, Samuel is confused by the voice that cries out to him in the night. He's convinced that the older and wiser Eli is calling for him. But Samuel is wrong. And Samuel must learn that it is God's voice that is crying out to him. It is God's voice that is leading him to answer that question "what are you looking for?" Or to put it in the words of our Holy Father, "What is God whispering to you?"

I think God is calling out to you, the young adults of our parish, as God is calling out to the young adults of our country and our

world. I think that God is calling out to you to become the hope for the future by the willingness you have to take that body of yours and allow God to let you become vessels of hope. I think God is calling out to you to learn to live your lives as men and women who take seriously your responsibility to be witnesses to God's life. Perhaps in the married state where we desperately need loving spouses and model parents...perhaps as a single person who gives witness by your generosity of spirit and your singleness of purpose... perhaps in priesthood or religious life where God asks you to empty yourself so that you might be free to minister to the community of faith all of whom struggle to give witness to the self-emptying love of Christ. No matter what it is try to discover what makes you burn, brings you joy, makes life good, gets you up in the morning and sometimes keeps you awake in the night. And never forget that no matter in what direction God is calling you, God will empower you to achieve your destiny.

Each and every one of you...you who are the teenagers and young adults of our parish or those still searching for their destiny...are a gift from God. And I am convinced that God is calling out to you...that God is begging you to use your gifts to help bring God's light and hope into a world that is so very desperate for meaning. If you think you hear

that voice...then join with Samuel and pray: “Speak Lord, because I’m listening.”