

► Sunday, January 18, 2009, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

*I Sam 3:3-10, 19; Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10; I Cor 6:13-15, 17-20; Jn 1:35-42*

Week #22: Main Theme: The universal call to holiness and cohabitation.

“Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will!” We prayed that response today with our psalm. We are all Samuels; we are all Andrews. God is looking at us today and, like Uncle Sam, pointing at us: “I want YOU!” What is it that He wants us to do? God the Father has a definite plan for each and every one of us. He has an absolutely specific plan for your life, a vocation or calling to live out His love in a concrete way for the salvation of the world. What is your vocation? Is it to live a faithful married life? Is it to become a priest or a religious brother or sister? One thing is certain: He wants you to become a saint.

“Me?” you might ask. “I’m not saint material!” Oh, but you are. Every human being is. You can’t do it alone, of course. That’s why you’ve been given the Holy Spirit in baptism, and with the Holy Spirit, God the Father and God the Son dwell in your hearts as long as you are in a state of grace. “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? A temple of the Holy Spirit?” That is why Paul can tell his flock: “Avoid immorality. Glorify God in your body.” That instruction was just as difficult two thousand years ago as it is today. But today, as then, the Holy Spirit gives all the help we need to live it out.

Let’s talk about a difficult issue. Let’s talk about sexual activity outside of marriage engaged in by a couple that is living together (this is called “cohabitation”). Sometimes people do this because they think it will prepare them for marriage. But cohabitators are fifty percent more likely to divorce than chaste couples! Cohabitation doesn’t prepare you for anything other than breaking up. Why? It’s easy: the only thing that prepares you well for the self-sacrificial love of marriage is self-sacrificing love! And that kind of love is expressed in chastity. Whatever your vocation is, cohabitation can only increase the chances that you will miss out on fulfilling it, and therefore miss out on the happiness God the Father has planned for you. So, remember that “you are not your own.” God has redeemed you body and soul by dying on the Cross. GOD died for you, and for me! Why? So that we might come, body and soul, to share in His undying happiness. Therefore, glorify our great and loving God in your bodies!

**Bulletin quote: “What is missing in non-marital cohabitation is trusting openness to a future life together, which love must create and build and which it is the law’s specific task to guarantee.”  
Pope John Paul II, 7/4/1999**

Suggested bulletin insert, if not used in the fall: “Cohabitation vs. Marriage: Is There a Difference?”