

## HOMILY 2<sup>nd</sup> SUN OT YRA 2017

Here I am Lord,  
here I am,  
I come to do your will.

This was the psalm response today. One of the things I really like about the sung psalm responses is that we repeat them, and some of them just get stuck in my head, I sing it to myself all day, and I never forget it. I think the psalm response is an important message to all of us today, so I want you to get it stuck in your head and never forget it. We should always be discerning God's will in our life. That is the way to health, wholeness, fulfillment and joy.

Today, I think the readings are all about vocations. I think vocation is a very complicated issue, and one that we should be focusing upon all of the time. We have public vocations, ones that are clearly visible to ourselves and to others. Examples are parent, spouse, doctor, teacher, priest. Many of these choices are lifelong choices. I think we also have what I would call encrypted vocations. I think they are encrypted by God, and we have to figure them out or discern them as we live our lives. We should be figuring out our encrypted vocation throughout our lives.

In the second reading we encounter Paul. His public vocation is to be a spiritual leader of the people. He starts by being a spiritual leader of the Jewish people, as part of the Jewish establishment. He then moves on to persecute Christians. But his encrypted vocation is "to be an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God" as he indicates in the reading. Exactly how he is going to live that out is also part of that encrypted vocation that will play out throughout his lifetime. In the Gospel reading we encounter John the Baptist. His public vocation is also to be a spiritual leader. How he does that is part of his encrypted vocation. He starts preparing the way for the Messiah, but he does not know who the Messiah is. When we encounter him today,

scripture scholars tell us that he has a large group of disciples. He has probably baptized 300,000 people with his baptism of repentance. He baptizes Jesus and discerns that Jesus is the Messiah. He also discerns that he must now step aside and let Jesus take over. Paul and John had a very public vocation, but it was critical that they figure out their encrypted vocation for them to do God's will. It is the same for each one of us. It is part of our life journey that unfolds throughout our lives. Our public vocation does not usually change a lot. We need to focus upon how we live out our public vocation by discerning our encrypted vocation.

I have had a number of public vocations. I have been counselor, manager, attorney and priest. People look at these public vocations and think how did you ever end up a priest? My encrypted vocation has always been pretty consistent, but I did not necessarily know that all along. Part of my encrypted vocation is to help people. I helped people as a counselor, manager, attorney and priest. My first job as an attorney was doing medical malpractice defense for a large law firm. I was representing the hospital interest, and my clients were hospital attorneys. I hated this job, and it was because I felt I was not helping people directly. It took me a while to figure that out. Another part of my encrypted vocation is that I am called to help people to heal. I never thought about it too much until I got the call asking me to come to St. Edith. They told me that the parish needed a lot of healing, and they wanted me to do that at St. Edith just like I was able to heal the people at St. Agatha. I was the administrator at St. Agatha and I closed the Parish while I was there. That was my public vocation, but my encrypted vocation was to help the people heal. Looking back now I can see that God healed a lot of people at St. Agatha through me. As I look back on my life I was doing a lot of that in all of the jobs I held. That kind of unfolded over time and I did not really name that until years later. Now I have the policy of meeting with anyone who wants to meet with me. I have people seeking me out. Some are

not from the parish. Some are not Catholic. Sometimes I wonder how they got to me and why they came to me with some of the issues they bring. But I think God brings them to me to help them. I will have to figure out what is going on there. I think we figure out our encrypted vocation by prayerfully looking back on our lives, being attentive to what we feel drawn to and what energizes us. I think we also must be attentive to what other people seek from us. Those are also clues.

So, name your public vocation. You will be able to do that very easily. Then look for your encrypted vocation. That is going to be more challenging, and it is a task that will last your whole life. And let that psalm response get stuck in your head.

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