

## HOMILY 2<sup>ND</sup> SUN OT YRB 2018

We have an opioid epidemic in the United States. Last year there were 64,000 overdose deaths nationwide. This was a 22% increase over the previous year. Overdose is the leading cause of death among people under 50. First of all we have to stop looking at addictions as a moral failure. We now know that addiction is a disease. We need to stop blaming people for their addictions and concentrate on helping them. We have many other addictions, alcohol, food, gambling, pornography, sex. And sometimes it is not an addiction but at times we all make unhealthy choices. I think we need to ask ourselves: “What are you looking for?” Are you looking for momentary pleasure? Are you looking for a way to numb bad feelings? Are you looking for a way to avoid problems in my life? Those are really the only things we can gain through addictions and unhealthy choices, and I do not think any of us are really looking for those things. What are we really looking for? I think we are all looking for God. Twelve step programs are really effective in helping people with addictions, and one of the reasons for this is the spiritual component. In the process of the 12 step program, we can find God, and if we find him he can help us.

In the Gospel reading, John tells 2 of the disciples that Jesus is the Messiah. He had an epiphany when he baptized Jesus and now he is sharing his faith with others. Now if it would have stopped there, the two disciples would have known about Jesus, but they would not have known Jesus. But it does not stop there. They follow Jesus, spend the day with him, and come to know him. Then Andrew, one of the disciples, goes and tells his brother Peter, and Peter comes to know Jesus. You see, that is the way we spread the good news of Jesus Christ, person to person. When was the last time you were so excited about something that you invited someone to come and see? John the Baptist and Andrew were so excited about coming to know Jesus that they invited others to come and see. How about you?

Jesus asks that really important question in the Gospel: “What are you looking for?” I think we each need to ask ourselves that question today. Are you looking for direction in your life? Are you looking for meaning in your life? Are you looking to be whole? Are you looking for a purpose? Are you looking for fulfillment? These are the things that I think we are all looking for, and we cannot find them in addictions and unhealthy choices, but we can find them through coming to know Jesus.

In the first reading we meet Levi and Samuel. Levi is a priest and lives at the temple. He is advanced in years, his eyesight was very poor, and so he could not stay at the temple alone. Samuel stayed with him at the temple to help him. Samuel would have only been about 11 years old at the time. When he heard someone calling his name at night, he assumed that it was Eli, because that is who he expected to hear calling him. When he went to Eli, he told him that he did not call him and to go back to sleep. The third time this happened, it finally dawned on Eli who it was. Someone was obviously calling Samuel, and it was not Eli. Who else was in the temple? God. Eli told Samuel, go back to sleep and if you hear that again answer God: “Speak Lord, our servant is listening.” Once he was open to God, once he expected to hear God, he was able to listen to him and be guided by him.

God is calling each one of us. How are you responding? How do we listen to God? Through personal prayer every day. We need to tell God our needs and wants and struggles, and then wait for an answer. You probably will not hear voices, but answers will frequently come in the form of an intuition. God sometimes speaks to us through people in our lives. Listen to the people who love you, and sometimes to the people that do not love you. Not everything that people tell us is from God, but do not be too quick to disregard what others tell you. And maybe you have a message from God for someone else? Did you ever think about that? Are you keeping it to yourself? And be very aware of what is going on in your life. Where is God’s hand in all of that? What are you looking for? Are you looking for God?