

A Reflection from Deacon Steve for the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Parishioners,

As the first month of 2024 comes to a close, we find ourselves at the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time. To truly appreciate the Word this weekend, we would do well to go back and refresh our recollection on the readings for the Second and Third Sundays of Ordinary Time. A common thread that has run throughout these holy messages is God's call and invitation to us for conversion. His is not just a universal call to the Church, but a call that comes to each one of us as individuals. Two Sundays ago, we heard about God calling young Samuel from his sleep in the Temple. We also heard of Jesus' call in John's gospel to Andrew and Simon Peter to follow him. A week ago, our Scripture readings told us of God's calling to a reluctant Jonah to give a message to the sinful population of Ninevah. That reading was followed by St. Mark's account of Jesus' calling of Andrew, Peter, James, and John to become his disciples and ***"fishers of men."*** Jesus announces that ***"the Kingdom of God is at hand."***

This week, our readings have Moses reminding the people that God will continue to communicate with the people through prophecy and promises to raise up one from among their kin to speak in God's name. The mystery of whom God is speaking about is solved with the coming of Jesus. St. Mark tells the story of Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum. The people there knew Jesus as a Jew like them, but they were astounded at the depth of his teaching. They witness him expel a demon from a man, an act which causes Jesus' fame to spread ***"throughout the whole region of Galilee."*** God spoke to his people in the Old Testament. He spoke to people through the lips of Jesus. He speaks to us today in Scripture, at Mass, in prayer, and in our conscience. Can you spare 28 minutes this week to listen to how God speaks to each of us individually daily? Go to wordonfire.org/videos/sermons/ and listen to Bishop Robert Barron's homilies for January 14 and 21, 2024. His compelling messages on the Second and Third Sundays of Ordinary Time lay the foundation for this Sunday's readings and will inspire you to follow the Psalm Response that we sung at Mass this weekend: ***"If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts."***

Deacon Steve Roscher