

2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Once upon a time, there lived three blind men in a village. One day the villagers told them, "Hey, there is an elephant in the village today." They had no idea what an elephant is. They decided, "Even though we would not be able to see it, let us go and feel it anyway." All of them went where the elephant was. Every one of them touched the elephant.

"Hey, the elephant is a pillar," said the first man who touched his leg.

"Oh, no! it is like a rope," said the second man who touched the tail.

"It is like a huge wall," said the third man who touched the belly of the elephant.

They began to argue about the elephant and every one of them insisted that he was right. It looked like they were getting agitated. A wise man was passing by and he saw this. He stopped and asked them, "What is the matter?" They said, "We cannot agree to what the elephant is like." Each one of them told what he thought the elephant was like. The wise man calmly explained to them, "Each of you are partially right and yet all of you are wrong. " You are right that an elephant is like a pillar and a rope and a wall. Yet, an elephant is none of these things. Each of you experienced the elephant in your own way, yet none of you experienced it the way the others did.

Today's readings call us to experience things in a new way. Samuel was a young boy who had never heard the voice of the Lord. So, naturally, he thought when he heard his name being called that it must be his teacher, Eli who was summoning him. Eli said that he did not call the boy and that he must be dreaming. Yet, soon Eli would remember that God can and does speak in dreams. He whispers your name in the silence of prayer and in the darkness of night. So, even though Eli had not been called by God, he was wise enough to tell Samuel to be open to the voice of God and respond, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

John the Baptist knew that he had a mission to accomplish and it was to announce the coming of the Lord. Yet, because of his strange clothes and fiery preaching some thought that he might be the Messiah. It might have been pretty heady for John to have his followers, including Andrew say, "I will follow you wherever you go." Yet, John said, "It is not me you are to follow, but it is the Lamb of God, Jesus who is the one you seek.

Andrew didn't know anything of Jesus. Yet, if John told him to seek him out, this he would do. Jesus saw Andrew following him and he asks, "What are you looking for?" Instead of Andrew answering directly he asks another question, "Where do you live?" Jesus invites him to see where he dwells. He invites him to enter into a relationship that will show him that Jesus dwells wherever his people are. He dwells with the rich and poor, with the righteous and with sinners. He will learn the Jesus is inviting him to come and see and to experience the power of God in new ways he couldn't even imagine.

Andrew decides to make that journey and then he invites others. He seeks out his brother Simon and tells him that Jesus is the Messiah. Yet, Simon Peter will have to discover on his own what that means and whether he can say yes. In fact each of us is called into a relationship with the Lord that will challenge, inspire, and nourish us. The call of God is seldom overwhelming. It usually requires the person to have an open heart and mind. It requires that person to put away their assumptions and expectations.

The invitation that Christ has given each of us in baptism and Confirmation is to bring light into darkness. We are to be heralds of Good News. We are to fight against injustice. We know that is a daunting task. Yet, we have an opportunity in our own county to do justice for youth. When a young person does something wrong and stupid the natural inclination many of us have and many in law enforcement have is to arrest them. Yet, we are called to look with new eyes and see other ways of dealing with these petty crimes. We can and should divert these kids from jail and steer them in the right path. When a child is issued a civil citation instead of an arrest they still need to

make amends, go to counseling, write a letter of apology or do whatever is necessary to make the situation right. Yet, that event doesn't haunt them into adulthood because they were not arrested. This is one way that as members of FAITH we strive to see as Christ sees.

There are many who do not see what we see. They are like the blind men trying to figure out what an elephant is. Maybe you and I can say, "Hey, there is a better way to deal with our youth. Let me show you how. Come and see!"