

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time - B

“What are you looking for?” Jesus puts the two disciples of John on the spot, right at the beginning, and with good reason.

They were already disciples of John. What were they looking for that would lead them to leave him in favor of following Jesus?

John played a key role, to be sure. He does nothing to try to keep them for himself, but true to his vocation, when he sees the one who is to come after him, he doesn't hesitate to point him out: “Behold, the Lamb of God.”

But that information alone would hardly seem to be enough to compel his disciples to follow Jesus. It had to link up with something going on inside of them, something which made them restless for something they could not put their finger on.

A famous saying of St. Augustine is that “our hearts are restless until they rest in God.” No doubt following John the Baptist had been the best the two disciples could find in terms of a teacher. But he wasn't God, and didn't pretend to be.

When he pointed out Jesus as the ‘Lamb of God’ they picked up on his meaning: Here was someone worthy of their attention. With John recommending that they follow him, they could do him no better honor, really, than to take his words seriously.

And so, when Jesus notices them following him, and asks them what they are looking for, their answer, “Where are you staying,” is really an admission that

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time - B

they want to get to know him better.

Jesus invites them to “Come and see” and, in doing so, invites them into a dialogue. It must have been a fruitful one, because in its aftermath Andrew, one of the two who had been following John the Baptist, could not wait to tell his brother, Simon, soon to be renamed Peter.

In fact, he is so taken by Jesus, that he proclaims him to be the Messiah, the long-awaited one.

At this early stage in the journey Andrew could hardly have been expected to understand all that that meant, but something fundamental had changed for him.

His restlessness had been transformed into a call, a vocation that he could not deny. Jesus said, “Come and see, but the invitation was not just for an afternoon’s conversation, but to a life of experiencing how God would draw him into a fullness of life that would be the only remedy for the restlessness of his heart.

Now and then, we have these moments when we have to make the “big picture” decisions: decisions about what career we will pursue, who we will marry, the way of life that we will lead. All these have as a basic component the consideration of how they will address the restlessness of our heart.

Sometimes we get it wrong, maybe because we don’t recognize the restlessness for what it is, or maybe because we overestimate the ability of our choice to address it.

The disciples of John knew enough that they could see the value of John’s teaching without expecting it to do

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time - B

the job that only the Son of God could do.

When we are working out the big picture issues of our lives, the vocation issues, we do well to put them into the context of our relationship with God. Let him into all those areas. We can move from responding to Jesus' question "What are you looking for?" to asking our own:

"Jesus, what are you looking for from me? What do you have in mind for me that will still this longing, this restlessness, and make me a follower who does his part, her part, in bringing your kingdom to earth?"

Of course, our vocations are not just about the big picture. There are a myriad of decisions we must make every day to be true to the big picture decisions we have made. But if we get the big picture decisions right, if we have put first things first, then the rest has a much better chance of following in proper order.

Andrew knew enough to proclaim already at the beginning that Jesus was the one they had been looking for. To his credit he stayed with him throughout his ministry and experienced first hand the victory God had snatched from the scandal of the cross: Jesus was not only Messiah, but Lord as well, and had bestowed on him the life of the Spirit.

If we give God a chance, he will give us the peace that only he can give, and our restless hearts will truly rest in him.