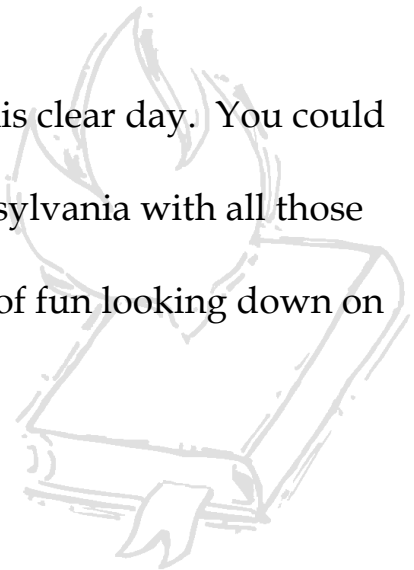


Homily
2nd Sunday OT - B
Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
January 16-17, 2021

1 Sm 3: 3-10, 19
Ps 40: 2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10
1 Cor 6: 13-15, 17-20
Jn 1: 35-42

A few years ago, I was taking an airplane from Chicago to Washington, D.C., heading towards The Catholic University of America during my first year of school there. It was a perfect day for flying- the temperature was great, the people were walking around in summer clothing, enjoying the warm day outdoors, the children were running around and nothing seemed out of the ordinary. Now I am the type of person who likes to look around and observe everything around me- the persons, the situations, pretty much life in general. Needless to say, I was feeling pretty well heading out to D.C. at the end of August that year.

The trip to Washington was spectacular on this clear day. You could see the mountains settled under the sky in Pennsylvania with all those little dots of people scurrying around. It's kind of fun looking down on



life from an airplane when you are flying. I felt like I was sitting next to God, looking at the presence of creation high atop of heaven.

And as I enjoyed the view from above without a care in the world, viewing all these theophanies circling around me, the airplane all of a sudden hit a pocket of turbulence and for about 20 seconds we were shaking in our seats rather abruptly. It was an experience rather unsettling for me, but the pilots had much experience with these kind of situations and before you knew it, the plane came out of the turbulence without any problems.

However, after this kind of experience, I wanted to talk to someone about it. The man sitting next to me on the plane was reading a newspaper and seemed like he had nothing better to do. So I began to speak to him. "A pretty rough experience," I commented to him. The man gave no response. I tried again. "The day seemed so quiet that you wouldn't have thought something like this would have happened," I said again. But once again, there was no response from the next seat over.

At his defiance, I gave the man a rude stare and lingered in my rude thoughts. I thought to myself, "What kind of man is this! At least he could have nodded or something and brushed me off rather than ignoring me altogether!" And for the rest of the flight, I sat in my seat next to this mean, hairy man, thinking why God would put me next to such a wicked person on such a beautiful day.

Later in the day, I was leaving the airport and picking up my luggage when I noticed the rude, hairy man meeting up with his girlfriend. I was pretty fumed up at that point and was going to give the man a piece of my mind when I noticed something that I did not see before. Mr. Mean, Hairy man embraced his girlfriend, gave her a kiss, and then started to move his hands around in such a manner as if to communicate with her. I began to realize after a short while that these two were signing to each other and that the man was hearing-impaired.

"Mr. Observation you are not," I thought to myself. For all the skills I thought I had at observing the things around me, I did not notice this

particular language that was foreign to me. The manner in which the two communicated was a form that I had not experienced before.

When I was reflecting on the readings this week, I thought about this couple who were communicating in sign language. I thought about standing in the airports, watching these so-called theophanies when the greatest of these were two hearing-impaired people speaking and I was too self-absorbed to notice. I began to learn a little bit about sign language after that. I learned that there is an entire Eucharistic Prayer and liturgy a priest can use in sign language. I learned some of the very basic words in sign, words like father, mother, prayer, bathroom, I am with you, thank you, I love you, and, most importantly, hamburgers.

In our readings today, we see many ways God exists in the world, many theophanies. We see that God called Samuel many times but in a way foreign to him, in a way that Samuel could not understand. We see St. John the Baptist and the call he made to the people around him to follow the Savior that they had not seen before. We see around us how the Church is all around us in different ways and visions, in the

different cultures and languages of the world. And in all these ways, God is just as present and loving as in the way we pray today in this Church.

The thing is, God is present today in so many ways that may seem foreign to us. God is present in the scriptures and in the Eucharist and in the priest as well *in persona Christe*, but he is also present in you as well, introduced to you at the moment of your baptisms. We read in the writings of St. Justin Martyr from 1900 years ago that this seed of God is planted deep within each of us and is planted within every molecule of creation. God lives with us and is all around us in all of existence.

Our challenge today is to recognize this seed of God in everything and hear the call of God all around us. As observant as we might think we are, none of us are as observant as we think. God surprises us every day in the way he calls us and lives with us. Our hope in life is to encounter this call deep within ourselves, and that God will never separate from us. We learn that God seems silent but is actually

speaking as clear as day in the world we see. He has shown us that he is with us so that he can take away our sins.

Therefore today, as we begin this Season of Ordinary Time, I end today's homily with a prayer in honor of a man who made God present to me some 15 years ago in a way I could not see before. Let share this prayer with God every day of our lives (in sign language): I love you, I am with you, and this is our prayer.