

## Homily for January 14, 2018, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

***“Here I am. You called me.”*** How often we can get that one wrong if we’re not listening and attentive. Like poor Samuel if we’re listening only when we are asleep, we might keep getting it wrong.

Take my life, for example. I remember when I was in high school and I was working in the office at St. Thomas Cathedral in Reno and one day when I was helping with the Christmas tree lights in the rectory, the rector of the Cathedral, Fr. Righini said to me, “Thanks so much for your help; why don’t you just become a priest.” Ha-ha-ha, I laughed. Isn’t he being nice, I could never be a priest. “Chuck, Chuck.” I thought a girl was calling my name. “Here I am.” How wonderful to be in love, right? What fun and joy and great, grown-up feelings. Until it falls apart or something or someone else, gets in the way.

Time to continue studying hard and push on. “Chuck, Chuck” I thought law school was calling my name. “Here I am. Let me sign up.” And off I went. In year one, I’m studying harder than I ever have in my life, and run smack into another priest, Fr. Jim, a member of a religious community called the Marianists. He invites me to a weekend discernment retreat. I had never been on a retreat. Time to be quiet. To listen to the Word of God. To listen to the Spirit within. “Chuck, Chuck” came a whisper. “Here I am. You called me.” I whispered back – both a little uncertain and a little afraid – “am I really hearing a call to religious life, even to priesthood? Naw, I’m in my first year of law school; I could never be a priest.” But I had been awakened and it was a call that simply was not going away.

Even after I became a lawyer, it was like Jesus himself asking me what he asked those two disciples in the gospel we heard today, *“What are you looking for?”* I wasn’t aware I was looking for anything but once he asked I wanted to know where he stayed.

“Chuck, Chuck” “Here I am,” I said. “You called me. Sign me up for the Marianists.” “No. I didn’t call you there.”

And finally, after some anger and confusion I quieted down deep within in and I finally said, *“Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening.”* “Ah, yes. I didn’t call you there, I called you here. Home. Nevada. *Come and you will see.”*

**We all look for something in our lives. There are many things and people that we think call our names, but it's not the same; it's not God. We're just sleeping, or sleep-walking, from one thing to the next. Oh those things or people call, and lure and tempt and cajole and push, but it really only is when we quiet ourselves down and invite the Lord to speak to us, and then remain in the space until he does, that we can truly hear his voice. "*Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.*" May that prayer be on our lips every day, not only once in a lifetime, not only for vocation, but for daily discipleship.**