

Marco? Polo

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Yes, some of you have played this kind of hide-and-peek game that for some reason is played only in a swimming pool – I supposed because of the confined space. . .If you haven't played – the person who is "it" closes their eyes – but keeps their ears open – trying to find the other players by calling out "Marco" and the others have to reply "Polo". So the Marco Polo dialogue kind of acts as sonar or radar or whatever, until the others are found.

You have to be a good listener in order to play the game. . .The first reading kind of reminds me of the Marco Polo game – because Samuel keeps hearing a voice – but he isn't quite sure who it is coming from. With Eli's help – they figure it must be the Lord – and the fourth time it happens, Samuel responds, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. . .

It should come as no surprise to hear that being a good listener is also needed to be a good disciple....

We, in faith, believe in a loving God who is always trying to communicate to us, continually trying to reveal himself to us – even in the most unlikely of places – as the Magi reminded us last week.

We, in faith, believe that God most perfectly revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ --- but also reveals himself to us in the Scriptures, the Church – especially in the Sacraments – and in wise people, the modern-day Magi – we are fortunate enough to have in our lives.

But God's voice is NOT the only voice that is crying out to us. There are, or course, may other voices which are vying for our attention –

some good, some not so good.

Some helpful, some destructive.

Some worthwhile. Some misguided.

Some leading us in a healthy direction, some luring us off the path.

Part of leading a holy, meaningful, God-centered life is sorting through these various voices – sifting through the barrage of messages we get every day – in an attempt to focus on the only voice that ultimately matters. . .BUT listening, is just ONE aspect of being a good disciple. . . The other, as you well know – if FOLLOWING – taking what we hear and understand and allowing ourselves to be motivated to act – stepping out in faith by following Jesus wherever he leads. . .

We see that played out in the Gospel today. Andrew and another disciple of John the Baptist hear him say: behold the Lamb of God – as Jesus walks by. They take what John says very seriously – as if they can hear in his voice something true and meaningful and holy. This piques their curiosity – and they begin to follow Jesus. After staying with Jesus for the rest of the day, Andrew is so moved and motivated and excited that he can't wait to tell his brother Simon – who would eventually become Jesus' right hand man. . .It's safe to say that Andrew must have had a heart that was open to God's grace and God's voice – that is, he must have been a good listener. Because first he listens to John – then listens to Jesus – and then responds by following after him.

Those first disciples knew who to listen to, were able to tune-in to the voice of God amid all the other noise and distractions of their lives. And on top of that, once they heard the voice of God in the hearts and lives --- they had the courage to follow.

**So that's them – what about us?**