

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 22, 2017
“Will You Answer the Call”
By Deacon Bill Pitocco

For the sake of Jacob, my servant of Israel, my chosen one..... Did anyone catch that line in the middle of our first reading today? Most people miss it but it's the most significant line in the reading! That line makes it clear for us that God has a grand plan, a purpose for everything; a script that He himself designed for humanity and is constantly at work to fulfill it... The scripture goes on to tell us that God will use anyone he wants to bring that plan to fruition.... If only we would answer the call! “For the sake of Jacob, my servant of Israel, my chosen one, I have called you by your name Cyrus’ giving you your title, though you knew me not”. Gods saying “It is I who arm you, you further my designs.... God created Cyrus to fulfill His purpose; to re unite and re-ignite the tribes of Israel who had been scattered and separated by war. And now It is time for Cyrus to play his part in salvation history; To bring the tribes back together in preparation of the coming of Jesus. This doesn't mean that Cyrus was just a robot programmed by God. No, like all of us, Cyrus was a free human being, endowed by God with life and a unique blend of talents. And God respected that. Every one of us chooses, every single day, whether we are going to utilize our freedom and talents in a way that is in harmony with God's plan, or not. But even when we make the wrong decision, abusing our freedom and rebelling against the moral law and the teaching of Christ, God is wise and powerful enough to make even that rebellion help his overall plan. He truly is the Lord of history, using all things, to build up the Kingdom of Christ. There is

something about being called by your name that is so sweet and it gets sweeter with time – I don't know when you are first able to understand your name as yours but we certainly come to it when we are called... I remember what it sounded like when my mom called me lovingly for dinner – Billy, come eat... or when my dad called me by all three of my names!! William Vincent Pitocco!! You knew what that meant! Your life starts to unfold and your name means something to family, to friends and others. Later in life, if you're married, when your wife expands your name, that's such a sweet sound... I know it's the same for all of us. I've heard it around here too. Camille calls me Really Bill? Further down the road of life our names get expanded further and take on additional meanings.. You may even be called sweet names like Mom, Dad or even Grandma and Pops. The point is, that over our lives, our names become more than just what we are called, they are a summation of our amazing personal stories, stories that in retrospect reveal that there couldn't possibly have been any other way it could have happened. God wants all to use all that...he has been an integral part of that story and he will call upon it by name when it is time to use the unique blend of those experiences to play their role in salvation history. But God knows the world calls you too. The world calls us to continually improve and educate ourselves by its standards, to be good spouses by its standard, the world calls us to be good moms and dads, example sons or daughters and BFF's forever. It calls us to careers that define us, to political parties that separate us, it calls us to stay physically active, to eat right, to take care of the elderly, to feed the poor, to help our neighbors, to be good pet owners it calls us to earn a fair wage AND EVERY April 15th, it calls us to pay our taxes. How in the world can anyone today answer God's call!! All of this tugging and pulling at us can lead us to finally say "stop". Just a minute" GIMME A BREAK... "What about ME". What is the purpose of all of this? It is these moments that we

recognize that we are the ones who are working without a script! God knows how hard it is for us to separate ourselves from worldly things and spiritual things. He doesn't want us to live with that anxiety. So he teaches us to give to Caesar what is Caesar, get that behind you give to God what is his! And that my friends is your entire life! God has a plan! He knows our purpose.. He's been part of designing who we are since he created us. He is the only one who can truly change the world we live in today and he wants to do it through us. Will we each answer HIS call? Will we each play your role in salvation history...The dividers of history followed their own designs but the great uniters of humanity were guided by the lord of history, humbly allowing God to lead them. Like Paul in our second reading, God calls him to speak to the Thessalonians and he answers the call. He does this with joy and a sense of wonder at what God has done. He speaks with Conviction and in the power of the spirit. But he recognizes that God chose the Thessalonians to know and love Christ and when he realizes he was the vehicle through which God made that happen, Paul is not only humbled; but he recognizes how he is playing his part in the grander plan. Every one of us in this room has been called by name in some way, every one of our stories meant to serve Gods great mission **at exactly the right time**. We are called to render to God what is Gods, to set ourselves above the noise and confusion of this world! He wants you to know right now, today, in this very moment through these scriptures that he is above everything in this world and everything in your life, Trust him and trust his plans for you.

Jesus did not come into the world to discuss tax policy, or to play politics. He did not suffer death on the cross and the glory of resurrection to establish the world's international economic system. His mission was to save people, to set them on the great pedestal of hope no matter what their issues were, no matter where they lived, what language they spoke, what currency they used, or under what kind

of government they suffered. All of these issues are important to us in our daily lives, but what Jesus demonstrated in our gospel is that all of those issues are of little consequence when compared to power of Eternal Salvation. Jesus is asking us to embrace that salvation, not by immersing ourselves in worldly distinctions and cares, but by finding ways to fulfill His Great objective. In order to succeed at that, we have to recall Jesus' sacrificial love for all of us, we have to understand that the truth in his love means that we have to also sacrifice our own standing in our world to follow in His way. The only true measure of wealth is not position in this world or what you have accumulated in it; the true coins of Heaven are charity, forgiveness and love in its fullest measure. God is calling us by name our earthly title, to invest those coins, to play our part in salvation history. It is he who has given us that title, it is he who arms us with these coins through our remarkable personal stories, to be who he needs us to be, right now, to provide a divine spark, to reignite and restore a world that is very separated today, for the sake of his Servant of Israel, His chosen one!