Second Sunday of Ordinary Time: January 17, 2021
St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore

A Reflection from the Scriptures of the Day

Samuel was called by God in today's first reading. Jesus called Peter in the Gospel. Few of us are called in such a dramatic way. Each of us has a vocation, a calling. Many of us have more than one. You may be called to be a teacher, a parent or a leader in your parish, your community or your society.

We often pray that more people will discern a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life. This is important. We have far too few choosing this kind of life. We should also pray for lay people who are willing to serve as Church leaders.

Similarly, we should pray for good people to serve the public in elective office. Recently we have witnessed what results when elected officials dedicate themselves to self-service rather than public service. There is no excuse for trying to stop an election which has already been certified by the states and reviewed by the judiciary. Accepting the results of an election is a matter of basic civics. Those who voted to hold up the election were irresponsible. As it turned out, their actions were also dangerous.

We citizens must accept our portion of the blame. Too many of us, of all political views, have sometimes put achieving our agenda ahead of respecting democratic norms and institutions. "The other guy is doing it, too" is no excuse. We need to elect leaders who will serve us within the boundaries of our democracy. To that end, we need good people who are willing to serve as elected officials. One of our parishioners, Odette Ramos, answered that call recently.

Lay people must similarly accept responsibility for what happens in our Church. Sisters, brothers and priests play important roles but the Church needs lay leaders as well. And those of us not in leadership positions have a responsibility to hold our leaders accountable, as well. Our nation and our Church are only as good as the people we choose to lead them.

James Casey