

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Year – B**  
**Norman Moran**

**Lectionary 65**

1 Sam 3:3b-10, 19  
Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10  
1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20  
John 1:35-42

**Possible preaching themes:**

- The dynamic of call and response is reflected in the communication between parents and children across multiple species.
- It is challenging to discern the authentic voice of God with so many other voices filling the airwaves.
- What is it that attracts disciples and allows them to perceive God's authentic call?
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**Possible scientific resources:**

- **Vocalizations across the animal world demonstrate how distinctive calls cement the relationships.**
  - This article from [American Scientist](#) reviews a number of species illustrating how vocalization based in auditory input is important for group bonding.
  - Each penguin produces a unique sound easily identifiable by other penguins [repertoire of vocalizations](#).
  - This short video documents the [unique vocalizations between penguins](#) in the wild.
  - This [short podcast](#) [with transcript] describes how animal kids listen to their parents even before they are born
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- The radio is a unique form of technology that continues to underscore the importance of sound communication and human vocalizations around the world.
  - This [short article](#) explains why radio has distinctive features allowing it to maintain its popularity and importance.
  - This more technical article explains different parts of the [radio spectrum \(RF frequency bands\)](#) and how they are used.
  - This [two minute video](#) illustrates in very accessible language how radios work.
  - A longer but very well illustrated article demonstrates how [robust radio broadcasting](#) is in the U.S., though most people underestimate its usage.
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- **What makes us want to listen to a voice?**
  - Punctuated by multiple sound clips, this article takes a psychological perspective in discussing why certain [voices resonate with us](#)

- New research suggests that listening to voices is a more effective way to [perceive another's emotions](#) (such as empathy) than watching their faces.
- This scientific piece demonstrates that a human voice can [influence behavior](#) simply based on the content of the words spoken by that voice on a previous occasion.
- Not only the words we speak but the speed, pitch and even “filler words” we use (um, ah) influence [how our message is perceived](#).

### Homily outline combining resources:

- **Tuning in to the radio**
  - The invention of the wireless in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is a relatively [new technology](#).
    - The first successful speech transmission didn't occur until about 1900
    - The first long distance voice transmission occurred on Christmas Eve 1906, including a bible reading and instrumental version of O Holy Night.
  - The period between 1920's and the 1950's is considered the “golden age” of radio.
    - Radio was the first electronic mass medium and monopolized the airwaves.
  - The advent of television in the late 1940's challenged the supremacy of broadcast radio.
  - While many believe that the [radio has been eclipsed](#) by other media, it actually [outperforms](#) podcasts and TV in the digital era.
  
- **Why so popular?**
  - Radio remains popular across the globe because of its great versatility.
  - The many frequencies of radio waves mean that they can be targeted for specific uses, e.g.,
    - For secret military communication to submarines
    - For navigation
    - For public broadcast
    - For amateur radio
    - Even for radio astronomy.
  - Broadcast radio also exhibits [unique characteristics](#):
    - It is locally created and consumed
    - Its immediacy can provide breaking news
    - The hardware is very inexpensive and the broadcasts are largely free.
  - The number one reason of its popularity, however, is its [documented inclusivity](#), with documented usages across all ages, genders and ethnicities.
  - Radio broadcasters also demonstrated great vocal gifts and skills.
    - Increasingly an effective “[radio voice](#)” needs to communicate authenticity and empathy.
  
- **Uncalibrated Samuel and calibrated disciples**
  - The amateur prophet Samuel had not yet learned to tune into the direct voice of God in today's first reading.
  - He was well attuned to Eli's voice and confused it with the voice of God.

- Maybe that was because Eli spoke with the authenticity of the Holy One
    - And echoed the empathy of the God who would call him to the prophetic life.
  - Ironically the disciples in today's gospel were much more attuned to Jesus.
    - Perhaps because they had been well coached to listen to God's voice by their previous teacher, John the Baptist.
    - And while Jesus does become a renowned preacher and storyteller as the gospels unfold
    - It is probably that even here at the beginning of his ministry he sounded to them like a familiar, even parental voice and presence
    - Filled with the empathy and authenticity, and marked by the inclusivity that would eventually gather many.
- **What frequency are we on?**
  - To suggest that we live in an era of saturated airwaves is an understatement.
    - Whether in our cars or in our homes
    - Sounds emanating from iPhones and Alexa apps bombard our environments.
  - With so many voices and so much noise
    - It is often difficult to discern voices of authenticity and empathy
      - Voices that are truly inclusive.
    - It is often difficult to discern the voice of God in our lives calling us to authentic, empathetic and inclusive discipleship.
  - In this often boisterous situation it is important to have mentors
    - Like Samuel had Eli
    - And the two disciples had John the Baptist
    - Who prepared them all to hear God's voice.
  - Furthermore, the baptized who were anointed at our baptism as priest, *prophet*, and king also need to learn the languages of authenticity, empathy and inclusivity
    - So that in our speaking we can direct others to the authentic Christ
    - And lifelong discipleship in his service.

**Tags:** authenticity, discipleship, inclusivity, radio, voices

### **About the Preaching with the Sciences Initiative**

A primary way Roman Catholics explore their faith and nourish their spirituality is by participating in Sunday Mass and actively engaging in the homily. However, few preachers explicitly connect faith or spirituality with science. The Preaching with the Sciences initiative, made possible by a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation, gathers scientists and leading homileticians to explore the positive contributions science can make to preaching, and consequently contribute to more contemporary modes of believing. Such contributions are grounded in the rich imaginations that scientists bring to their work as well as in scientific discoveries that have a potential for revealing religious truths and even shedding new insight on ancient teachings and beliefs.

With guidance from world-renowned scientists with differing areas of expertise, a select number of homileticians will draft homily outlines for preaching key Sundays and feast days across the 3-year lectionary

cycle. Over 100 homily outlines will highlight some of the way's sciences and the contemporary search for religious meaning can interface. These free homiletic resources have the potential to influence thousands of preachers seeking help each week in crafting sermons and helping to shape a scientifically informed religious imagination among future preachers.