

GOD IS CALLING YOU!

At the age of 15, Margaret Mehren was a member of the Nazi youth movement in Germany. She did not believe in God. But, after the war she learned about the atrocities in Nazi concentration camps. And she was shocked. Suddenly she realized that Hitler wasn't the glorious leader she thought he was. She vowed never again to believe an adult.

It was in this frame of mind that Margaret also began to have doubts about her atheism. One day she even prayed to God, saying, "God, if you do exist, give me some sign" About this time she ran across a Bible. She tried to read it several times, but it made no sense to her. Then one night she picked it up again. This time it made sense! She wrote later:

Something happened to me when I read the words of Jesus. I knew he was alive! I knew he was there, even though I could not hear or see anything. "Jesus was real, more real than anything around me, the furniture, my books, the potted plants. I was no longer alone. My life was no longer a dead end street."

A few years later, at the age of 21, Margaret became a Franciscan nun. Today, 25 years later, she is a missionary, teaching minority students in South Africa.

Margaret Mehren's story dramatizes the fact that God still calls men and women today, just as God called Jonah in Old Testament times and James and John in New Testament times, in today's gospel.

When we speak of God's call to people to be God's prophets or of Jesus' call to people to be his disciples, we frequently speak of it as a vocation. The word vocation comes from the Latin word meaning "to call."

We also think and speak of God's call as being directed to young people, especially. And certainly that is true. One of the great spiritual leaders of our time was the Indian Jesuit Anthony de Mello. Tony said he felt God's call in his teens.

When he asked his father for permission to become a priest, Tony's dad said no. He had only two other children, both daughters. It was Tony's duty to carry on the family name.

Then, after a span of 14 years of having no children, Tony's mother became pregnant. When she was taken to the hospital for delivery, Tony ran the entire four-mile distance on foot.

Arriving breathlessly, he asked, "Is it a boy or girl?" When his father said it was a boy, Tony said, "Great! Now I can become a priest." And at the age of 26, he entered a seminary in Bombay. He went on to become internationally famous.

The point is this: God is still calling people today, just as God called Jonah in Old Testament times and James and John in New Testament times. And God is calling both men and women. And God is calling both young and old.

If you respond to this call, you will know that...

YOUARELOVED

Deacon Dan