

The Second Sunday of Ordinary Time 2021

This weekend is Saturday the 16 and Sunday the 17 January, beginning the Second Week of Ordinary Time.

Sharon Irving sings 'Habakkuk's Song'.

In today's reading from the First Book of Samuel, we see perhaps the most clear and powerful expression of longing for God. As you listen, see how it speaks to any longings you may feel.

1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19

Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, 'Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.

In a way this reading can be seen as actually quite funny and we have to admire the patience of Eli, woken up, not once, not even twice but three times by this young and over-excited lad. And what of young Samuel himself? He was in the Temple of the Lord, we heard. It seems that he'd fallen asleep there. What on earth was he doing sleeping in the Temple? Which of these two people most catch your imagination?

The prophets knew and recognised the longing for the call of God in their lives and the coming of the Messiah, the hope that had been passed from generation to generation. But this did not begin suddenly; rather, it grew and developed in them as they learned to listen to the voice of God. Samuel was no exception. God's voice is not always easy to discern because it is seldom

loud and never brash. It is much more likely to come to us quietly, in the quiet, maybe during the night, as Samuel found. Do you find it difficult to hear the voice of God in your life?

God's call can be easy to ignore, for a shorter or even a longer time, even for many years, but it is quietly insistent and never goes away fully. And it's not only heard in the form of a voice but can come to us in other ways, too – through friends, through circumstances, through moments of beauty and of crisis. And, like Samuel, we will always be able to find, sooner or later, a wise elder to help us to make sense of it all. Where might this call have been sounding in your own living? As you listen again, try and hear and get some sense of that call of God, through this reading.

Did you get some hint of that call – being called by your own name, called to a fuller, more authentic life? Or perhaps you long to hear such a call but are not aware of it yet. Maybe it's been there already, but you need to find some stillness, some quiet, to hear it, really. What are the feelings that emerge in your heart at this moment? Take them to the Lord who calls; take these feelings to him, ask him to fulfil the longing you have.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.