

Today is Wednesday the 12 January, in the first week of Ordinary Time.

The Convivium Singers with the Choir of Portsmouth Cathedral sing, 'Nearer my God to Thee'.

Today's reading is from the first book of Samuel.

1 Samuel 3:1-10,19-20

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and 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. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.

In this passage we learn that Samuel, Hannah's son, is now ministering under an infirm Eli, at a time when the Lord has become distant. The word of the Lord was not heard, visions were not seen. Abandonment or neglect? And on whose part?

How does image this speak to you?

'Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.' Samuel lives in the Temple yet mistakes the Lord's voice not once but three times.

Reflect on how often has the Lord called to you and you have mistaken it for something else or not heard it at all?

As you listen again, hear the 'Not yet', God does not give up on Samuel, even if it means

prompting Eli. Bring to mind a time when you have heard the prompt, or, recognised that you have been the guide for others?

With infinite patience, God speaks to us in all manner of direct and indirect ways. Let this moment of prayer open your heart and mind to God's call.

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.

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