

Listen for the voice of God

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Jan. 19): (R3) John 1:35-42; (R1) 1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19; (R2) 1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20.

Throughout the pages of the Bible we find a God who loves us and wants the very best for each of us. Because he loves us, he speaks to us, sometimes in the depths of our hearts, sometimes through other persons, sometimes through events.

In the first reading for next Sunday, God speaks to a young boy named Samuel. Samuel's mother, Hannah, had dedicated her son to God's service. When he was just a young boy, Hannah brought him to the temple to serve there under the high priest Eli.

Samuel's sleeping quarters were in the sanctuary, right next to the Ark of the Covenant. One night while Eli and his sons were sleeping in the next tent, God called young Samuel, "Samuel! Samuel!" Samuel was frightened.

Startled by the voice, Samuel at first thought it must be Eli. So he got out of bed and raced to Eli's tent. "Here I am," Samuel said, "for you called." Eli had been sound asleep. He thought Samuel was hearing things and so he told him to go back to bed. Samuel did. But as he fell asleep he once more heard a voice calling his name, "Samuel." Again he raced to Eli's tent. Eli sent him back to bed.

Then it happened a third time. Again he rushed to Eli's side. Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'"

God speaks to us, but sometimes



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

we don't listen. It took old Eli three times before he realized that it was God who was calling Samuel.

Why was God calling Samuel? Samuel was perhaps just seven or eight years old. But God calls persons of all ages. God speaks. What prevents us from hearing? Could it be that we never listen? Or are we too busy with the things of this world?

One day a woman was afraid of losing her job. She was almost in a panic. But she read in the Bible, "God is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in distress" (Psalm 46). She realized that she was trusting people and what they said more than she was trusting God. So she calmed down and started trusting God and in the end all worked out well for her.

God speaks so often to us, but so often we aren't listening. When God called Samuel, Eli told Samuel to answer, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." And God spoke to Samuel.

One reason why we might be reluctant to hear God's call is because of the changes he might require of us. That night when God spoke to Samuel, he gave him some disturbing news. God told Samuel, "I am about to

punish Eli's house forever." Samuel was to take his place. Samuel probably didn't want to hear this, but God assured him he would not be alone.

Peggy Terry lived in Montgomery, Alabama, during the bus boycott of the 1960s. She remembers seeing white men picking up black women and throwing them into the buses. She recalls seeing Martin Luther King Jr. beaten outside the city jail. He didn't fight back and didn't cuss. At that moment she realized she, too, must do something. Peggy began to act on her beliefs and began to do something to bring about racial justice. So often God speaks to us through others. We must act.

Samuel was unable to go back to sleep that night. He had been awakened four times by God in one night. Everything happened as God told him it would. Eli's sons were killed and Eli himself died shortly after. Then all Israel knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.

God speaks to us in many ways. We need to spend more time listening. And we need to be prepared to change — to become by the grace of God a new person.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, January 20
Hebrews 5:1-10
Psalms 110:1-4; Mark 2:18-22

Tuesday, January 21
Hebrews 6:10-20
Psalms 111:1-2, 4-5, 9, 10C
Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday, January 22
Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17; Psalms 110:1-4; Mark 3:1-6

Thursday, January 23
Hebrews 7:25-8:6; Psalms 40:7-10, 17; Mark 3:7-12

Friday, January 24
Hebrews 8:6-13; Psalms 85:8, 10-14; Mark 3:13-19

Saturday, January 25
Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 0:1-22
Psalms 117:1-2; Mark 16:15-18

Kids' Chronicle

Answers from page 12:

1. c, 2. f, 3. g, 4. a, 5. b, 6. d, 7. e

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