



Daily Reflections

SPEAK LORD!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Excerpts from Today's First Reading and Gospel

During the time young Samuel was minister to the LORD under Eli, a revelation of the LORD was uncommon and vision infrequent. ... Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was. The LORD called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am."

Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to sleep." ... The LORD called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me." Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth. So, Eli said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the LORD came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you." He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come." So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

MARK 1:35-39

Reflection

Speak Lord, I'm listening! Am I? Are you? Are we listening with an open heart? Listening can be selective, and my hunch is we all have selective listening from time to time. It is so important for us to listen with all our senses so as not to miss those moments when our Lord speaks to us.

Samuel heard the Lord calling out to him and at first, he thought it was Eli. There are two points here worth noting. First, Eli was attuned to God and understood that this was God calling to young Samuel. Second, Samuel listened to Eli and when he heard God's call for the third time, he responded immediately.

I have to say that there have been times in my life when I didn't respond to God's call immediately. There have been times where I've listened for only what I wanted to hear. And like with Samuel, God didn't stop calling! Eventually I responded and sought to listen to God's movement in my life with a greater sense of receptivity and openness. What I'm so grateful for is that God doesn't stop calling and awaits my response. My desire is to respond more readily and easily without the filters that sometimes arise within me.

One of the tools I find most helpful to remaining attentive and actively listening is to work at calming the chatter within me when I come to prayer. I place myself in an environment where distractions are limited and there's a sense of calm and quiet. Another avenue for me is to walk slowly in forests, along the shoreline of the ocean, or to sit quietly by a stream. What is vital to creating a prayerful environment is to have both an internal and external setting of serenity and peacefulness.

The passage from Mark's Gospel is important because it gives us a glimpse into Jesus' public ministry. He sought the solace of quiet in a "deserted place" and when he was ready, rejoined his disciples and continued fulfilling his ministry of preaching and healing. It is such a wonderful reminder for us to seek this balance of prayer and action that flow from our prayer. Each of us is called to

use our gifts in service of our brothers and sisters, as well as in the care of Earth and all living creatures.

Enter the Sacredness of Prayer

Come, come to the quiet of prayer O restless wanderer,
pause and listen with all your being, for your God is calling.

Open wide your heart to hear the pearls of wisdom within,
be patient and gently calm your whole being in anticipation
of God's Word arising within you.

Pray, attuned to all your senses, as God continues
to draw you into a fuller experience of discipleship.



For Pondering

- How have you experienced God's call in your life? Have you experienced God's call in ways that surprised you?
 - How open and receptive are you to experience God in new and unexpected ways? Is this a desire you seek in prayer?
 - How might your coming to prayer need to change in order to be fully present to the Spirit of God within you?
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For Prayer

*We pray for the grace to open ourselves to your call, O God.
We pray for the openness of new forms of prayer in our lives
that invite a deeper experience of listening and discernment.*

*May our desire to hear and respond to you
be foundational to our commitment to daily prayer.*

Amen.

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