

March 19, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH LENT

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THE LORD SEES INTO THE HEART

By Sister Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

Today's Reading

The LORD said to Samuel: "Fill your horn with oil and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons."

*As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is here before him." But the LORD said to Samuel: "Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. **Not as humans see does God see, because humans see the appearance, but the LORD looks into the heart.**" In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any one of these." Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse replied, "There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep." Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here." Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance. The LORD said, "There—anooint him, for this is the one!" Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.*

Reflection

Samuel, son of Hannah and Elkanah, and God's trusted prophet, was sent to Jesse of Bethlehem to select the new king who would follow God's covenant with Israel. Acting on God's behalf, Samuel saw seven of Jesse's sons and realized that none of them was God's choice to become king, even though each had many outward qualities. Samuel was being guided by God's wisdom and knowledge: humankind sees outward appearance, but God sees the heart and knows a person within. When Samuel saw the youngest son, a shepherd boy, he was guided by God to select him and anoint him. Here was God's choice: *"the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David."*

Although David was destined for kingship, this anointing was done at a secret banquet because it was during the rule of Israel's first leader, King Saul, who had rejected God's law, was disobedient and had fallen out of favor with God. As the story unfolds, God's spirit and divine presence flourished in David and manifested his gifts in leadership as King of Israel in the second book of Samuel.



Art by Sr. Ellen O'Leary, CSJ

For Pondering

When Samuel was discerning which one of Jesse's sons God was selecting to be the future king, Samuel listened to God's wisdom within himself: humans only see the exterior; God sees within. David was the youngest of Jesse's sons, not considered important among the brothers and their father. He was relegated to the care of the flock, yet God chose the 'insignificant' shepherd to be the one most suited, the one who had the heart to tend to God's people. In the Book of Exodus, Moses had been a shepherd. In the words of the prophet Ezekiel, God said, "*I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep...*" (34:15)

May this story be a reminder that God sees differently from the ways we humans see things. When I tend to make a quick judgement about someone, based on external events or physical qualities, I need to pause and listen to the whole story that is not understood at first, to listen with the heart to God's gift of wisdom and insight. Perhaps a psalm of David will guide my tendency to make judgements based only on human criteria.

For Prayer

*The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.*

*He guides me in right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff that give me courage.*

PSALM 23:1-4

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