



JANUARY 17, 2020 | 2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

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WE ARE THE NEW SAMUEL—GOD IS CALLING US!

DURING MY formation to the priesthood, I had one of my six weeks pastoral experiences with an elderly priest who had a hilarious way of calling people around him for assistance. He would clear his throat and ask: “Who is nearby?” Consequently, anyone within earshot would emerge to help him with an errand which often consisted of giving him the television remote around the corner, or to hand him a book just beside him.

During the first week of my stay with him, I discovered that I was the only one running the errand for him because I would always rush to him when he called out. It dawned on me in the subsequent weeks that whenever the priest cleared his throat, the young people who had been staying with him would quickly run away. The idea was to avoid his call for a nearby person because the errands were mostly annoying, like he once called and asked me to search for his

keys. Meanwhile he was sitting on them and turning off the television he was watching.

The First Reading today (1 Sam 3:3b-10,19), tells us about the call of Samuel at a very critical time in the history of the people of Israel when they sinned and lost divine communication. We could recall that Samuel was dedicated to the service of God as his mother Hannah promised when she came to Shiloh to pray for the fruit of the womb after years of bareness. Samuel thus represents God’s answer to the prayer of Hannah.

It is important to note that the call of Samuel came while he was sleeping in the temple where the ark of God was. In life, where you choose, determines what happens your way. Samuel decided to stay close to God, and that was why God could reach out to him. God would always reach out to those who are nearby. In the manner of the elderly priest in our opening story, God was asking: who is nearby; and Samuel was the closest.

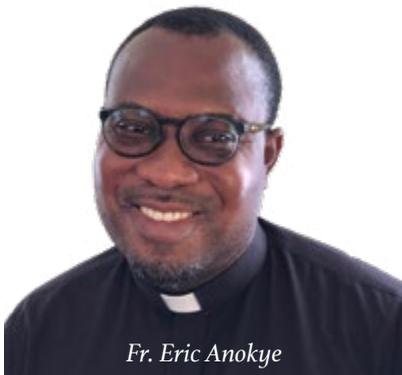
The story of the call of Samuel is also our own story. God is continually calling us through His words to come out of the darkness and enter his marvelous light (1Pet. 2:9). God calls us to himself through the sacraments. Through baptism, we are called to become children of God and members of the Church. In the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, we

are called into union with Christ through our partaking in His Body and Blood (John 6:56). And in the sacrament of holy anointing, we are called out from infirmity to wholeness and restoration (Jer. 30:17).

The sacrament of confirmation calls us into the legion of the faithful soldiers of Christ, while in the sacrament of penance we are called to repentance and eternal life. In the sacrament of holy orders, we are called to become ministers of the word and the sacraments while in the sacrament of the holy matrimony, married couples are invited to dedicate themselves to love and service for the rest of their lives while being open to procreation and training of the children God may give to them.

Today, in our day and age we have many voices calling for our attention and the question we should ask ourselves is “whom do we answer?” We are the new Samuels of our time; how often do we respond to God’s call? Usually, we give excuses why we should not answer the call of God inviting us to repentance, faith, charity, and hope in God. We often prefer to answer the call to social, political, and cultural lives to the detriment of our spiritual lives.

In the Second Reading (1 Cor.6:13c-15a, 17-20), St. Paul brings our attention to the call to immorality which many people tend to answer and defy the body which should be for Christ.



Fr. Eric Anokye

The reality is that there is a conflict between the flesh and the spirit. St. Paul writing to the Galatians (5:16ff) tells us to live by the spirit and not to gratify the desires (call) of the flesh because the flesh is opposed to the spirit and the spirit is opposed to the flesh.

In the Gospel Reading (John 1: 35-42), Andrew and another disciple of John decided to follow our Lord Jesus Christ when John pointed out that He is the lamb of God. That decision was an answer to a divine call. Andrew extends the call by introducing his brother Simon Peter to the Lord. The invitation today is not only to answer the call but also to bring others along to come and see the Lord and what He could do in our lives.

Today, we are all invited to be attentive to the divine call at various points in our lives. God is still calling us in our minds and hearts, in our families, in our daily preoccupations, in our communities, and other engagements. Let us like Samuel be ready to say, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening."

Have a great day and a glorious week ahead.

“God is continually calling us through His words to come out of the darkness and enter his marvelous light.”

PASTOR

Fr. Eric Anokye
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OFFICE MANAGER/ BOOKKEEPER

Lydia St. Peter

OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Fri 9:30AM – 2:30PM

Please call the parish office to make arrangements for the **Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick or Holy Matrimony** as well as funerals. **Reconciliation** is available from 30 minutes before a scheduled Mass.

MASS TIMES

SATURDAY

4PM – St. Joseph's

6PM – St. Mary's

SUNDAY

9AM – St. Elizabeth's

11:30AM – St. Theresa's

MON | WED | FRI

10AM – St. Theresa's

Cover image:

Caravaggio, *Calling of Sts. Peter and Andrew*, 1603-6

THE DAY AFTER

RANDALL SMITH, *The Catholic Thing*



AS I WRITE, it is the day after the execrable invasion at the capitol. By the time you read this, there will undoubtedly have been hundreds of commentaries written from every perspective about every aspect of that event. I have nothing especially wise or insightful to add. And yet, it seems foolish to write about anything else since most people will likely not be talking about much else. The article I intended to write on Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist might have seemed oddly out of place.

I view the event at the capitol the way I view stories about airplane crashes. Although I want to know everything about what happened instantly, in my wiser moments, I know that we simply can't know everything we want to know that quickly. Better to be patient and wait for the full facts to come to light and for wiser, more considered judgments to prevail.

So I beg your indulgence for a moment to go off in a completely different direction. Early in the New Year, I attended a lovely wedding. Nothing especially fancy or expensive, but as wonderful and loving an event as you could hope to enjoy. Forswearing fear, two people in love chose to unite themselves in a sacramental union that is the closest analogy we have to God's union with His Church. And a bright light shone in the darkness.

Look around; there is love, beauty, and goodness everywhere shining in the darkness. We have been given the gift of wonderful neighbors and fellow citizens. They may like different things and think differently from us; they may disagree with us politically. But that can make discussions more interesting and mutually correcting if

we engage in them wisely. Our neighbors are a gift from God. They are the ones God has put into our lives, not some other “better” people. They may not be saints, but neither are we. God loves them, and so must we.

After I heard about what had happened at the capitol building, I went home to have dinner with my wife. A friend sent a picture of her adorable puppy. His name is Marty, but I call him Professor Waffles. Another friend posted a picture of a beautiful winter sunset over the houses in Providence, Rhode Island. Today, I got up, went to work, and then attended daily Mass at a beautiful local church.

Two things strike me about all of that. The first is simply the obvious fact that we in this country are immensely blessed. We have food in abundance and a freedom to worship unknown to most people throughout the world. But most of all, we have the love and care of a God so devoted to us He was willing to die for us despite our sinfulness—a sinfulness so great that we conspired to kill Him when He came to rescue us from ourselves. Despite our unworthiness, we have been given gifts in abundance. We ought to recognize that fact, be grateful, and act in accord with the love bestowed upon us and the tremendous sacrifices made for us.

But the second reason I mentioned what would otherwise be trivial details is to remind us how many parts of our lives remain essentially untouched by the hysteria in Washington. We talk to friends and family members. We smile and say hello to the checkout person at the store. We go to Mass, hear the Word of God, and receive the Eucharist. So many parts of our lives and so many of our relationships are simply untouched and untainted by whatever foolishness happens to be going on in the nation’s capital. There is a wealth of goodness in the country and good will between neighbors that sustains us from day to day and that can, if we attend to it properly, draw us up out of the muck in which the news media and social media wish to bury us. Peace must begin inside each one of us and then spread outward.

We could let the hatreds we see unleashed and stirred up by the press and social media destroy us. But why would we? It might be worth remembering something T.S. Eliot

wrote years ago about the press:

*To communicate with Mars, converse with spirits,
To report the behaviour of the sea monster,
Describe the horoscope, haruspicate or scry,
Observe disease in signatures, evoke
Biography from the wrinkles of the palm
And tragedy from fingers; release omens
By sortilege, or tea leaves, riddle the inevitable
With playing cards, fiddle with pentagrams
Or barbituric acids, or dissect
The recurrent image into pre-conscious terrors—
To explore the womb, or tomb, or dreams; all these are
usual
Pastimes and drugs, and features of the press:
And always will be, some of them especially
When there is distress of nations and perplexity
Whether on the shores of Asia, or in the Edgware Road.*

But, says Eliot:

*. . . to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint—
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime’s death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.*

A lifetime’s death in love, ardor, selflessness, and self-surrender. That is our occupation now, is it not?

And in this time of distress, may I suggest we remember the example of St. John Paul II and the difficult years he spent peacefully but firmly pushing back against the multiples evils of the day with profound understanding and strength of character. Then that point of light shining in the darkness, though it may seem distant, should be for us like the star in Robert Frost’s poem “Choose Something Like a Star.” The saint, like the star

*. . . asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a [saint]
To stay our minds on and be staid.*

mass intentions

Date Intention

1/16 SATURDAY

4PM

6PM

1/17 SUNDAY

9AM Rose & Mike Rocchetti

11:30AM Jay Blankenship †

council members

PARISH COUNCIL:

Tonya Hylton, Frannie Minton, Ralph Shawver, Cindy Deskins, Barbara Jones, Donna Lambert

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Kathy & Bob Buchanan, Randy Bolling, Doug Vance, Anne Danko, Jim Talbert, Jackie Shawver, Janet McDonagh

please pray for

Louise Serreno*
 Margie Stutso *
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 Billy Akers
 Scotty McBride
 Gerry Hankins
 Eric Pellerin
 Clarence Moore
 Lexi Cox
 Sarah Wall
 Paris Whisher
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 Leo Brown
 May Anne Rynne
 Carolina Ferrare
 Junior Aiken
 Mary Spencer
 Shirley Hylton
 Anne St. Peter
 Sue Shumate
 Rayburn Minton
 Jeanne Hash
 Philip & Pat Imel
 Lara Marshall
 Virginia Shumate
 Jim Shumate

stewardship of treasure

Donations Received as of January 10 (Week 28)

| CHURCH | ATTENDANCE | RECEIVED |
|-----------------------|------------|----------|
| St. Joseph's | 7 | \$138 |
| St. Elizabeth's | 18 | \$360 |
| St. Mary's | 9 | \$285 |
| St. Theresa's | 22 | \$630 |
| Total Offertory | 56 | \$1,413 |
| Outside Donations | | \$2,150 |
| Year to Date Received | | \$66,714 |
| Goal | | \$61,923 |
| Ahead/Behind Goal | | +\$4,791 |

OUTSIDE DONATIONS – THANK YOU!

Hampton, VA donor: \$2,000
 Hampton, VA donor: \$150

OTHER DONATIONS

St. Theresa's Building Fund: \$283
 St. Mary's Building Fund: \$50

Mass continues to be livestreamed Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 10AM from St. Theresa's and the church will be open for anyone who wishes to attend in person. **Masks are mandatory!** The 11:30AM Sunday Mass at St. Theresa's will also continue to be livestreamed for those who are not yet able to join us in person.

JOIN THE JOURNEY

SURVEY OF THE BIBLE

Walk with Fr. Eric every
Wednesday evening at 7pm



ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AT
facebook.com/holyfamilyswva

Holy Family Parish: Tazewell | Richlands | Pocahontas | Crundy

Every Wednesday evening at 7PM, Fr. Eric will lead us in a study of Sacred Scripture.

This will be an ongoing series, with occasional breaks. We are currently studying the Gospel of Matthew.

Why not start a new relationship with the Word! Come in person or join us on Facebook. Questions and comments will always be welcome!

birthdays & anniversaries:

JANUARY

BIRTHDAYS—19: Pete Belcher

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