

January 14, 2018

Our new Bishop, Edward Wisenburger will be in our parish on Monday morning, January 29th, around 10:30ish. He has a meeting with me over in the rectory first. He is going around the vicariate; some people call it the deanery; he's visiting our seven parishes. He's doing this across the diocese, to see what each parish looks like because in the diocese of Tucson, we are really unique among all the different parishes that we have. The other parishes in the vicariate will get him on Sunday when nobody's working, but we get Monday morning. We are going to have a small prayer service and then we'll have a meet and greet for Bishop Wisenburger. He is looking forward to that, so, just a heads up, I'll get you a more detailed time as soon as he and I nail down some things his week. If you would like to come and meet him, there you go, Monday morning.

Little boy and his father were sitting through Mass and they were sitting through this long drawn out sermon on the priesthood and vocations to the priesthood, and the little boy was getting fidgety. Finally, he looked up and all of a sudden, he saw the red sanctuary lamp and his eyes got big and his mouth dropped open and he leaned over to his dad and said, "Dad, when the light turns green can we go?"

Today our first reading is from the book of Samuel. Samuel is about fifty some chapters long, maybe forty some. Only fifteen chapters are devoted to Samuel himself. The rest of the chapters are devoted to King David. Samuel's mother Hannah was married to this guy I can't remember, but his other wife's name was Peninnah. Peninnah had children and Hannah didn't. So, Peninnah would look to Hannah and go, "I have children and you don't, nah nah nah nah nah nah nah." It made her miserable because for a Jewish woman, the ultimate goal is to have kids, because you might be the Mother of the Messiah. There was nobody, that didn't want to have any kids. So, she was miserable. Her husband would console her by saying, "aren't I worth more than ten sons to you?" She would just be quiet because to her, he wasn't. In the laws at that time, you needed sons to take up for you, in all things. They would go to the Temple and they would worship. The husband would give Hannah a double gift to give to God and to worship and this went on for several years. One day she went to the Temple and she couldn't take it anymore. She fell to the ground sobbing and loosing herself in prayer. The priest Eli, who we just read about, came out and said, "woman, stop being drunk in public, get off your wine." The reason he said that was because, Jews at that time didn't pray on their knees or on the ground, they prayed standing up, arms raised, talking out loud. If you go to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem today, all the Jews that are praying, are talking out loud, it's just a lot of noise. So, she was on the ground, he thought she was drunk, she said no and explained to him what was going on in her life. He said, "may your prayers be granted by God, go in peace." The next year she gave birth to Samuel. She raised him until he was weaned, two or three years old, and then the gift that God had given her after all these years, she took Samuel back and left him with the priest Eli in the Temple, to be raised in the Temple. She gave God the gift back. Had to be very difficult. So when we get to our story today, Samuel may be five, six, seven years old. He'd lived in the Temple several years. Eli is asleep in front of the Tabernacle. This is symbolic because it means he is asleep around God. When we're asleep, we don't hear anything, we don't see anything, we don't feel anything, we miss out on life if we are asleep. So, Eli is asleep in the presence of God. He is not listening to God; he is not having an encounter of any kind with God. Once more, Eli is a horrible priest. His two son's **Hoffiny and Finniious**, are horrible priests. They molest the people, they rip them off, they do all kinds of horrible things. And, Eli the father, does not correct them,

nor does he take them to the authorities and have them corrected. He lets this abuse continue. Later on in the story, Eli and his sons die. His sons are killed in battle. God had already told Samuel, "I am going to wipe this family off the face of the earth because of the abuse they heaped on the people." They should have been helping them. The two sons are killed in battle, and when Eli gets the news, he falls over backwards and breaks his neck, and that was it, so God's prophesy comes true.

Samuel goes on to become probably the third greatest prophet in the old testament. We have Moses, we have Elijah and we have Samuel. John the Baptist doesn't count in the Jewish world, it's our world. When he grows up, God lets him be one of those people that the people want to come to for justice and to know God in their lives. But, the people want a king. All the other countries around have a king, they wanted one too. God says, "Okay" and let them have one. Samuel begins the monarchy in Israel by anointing King Saul and then King David. He is around doing tremendous things. He was open to the will of God; he was open to the voice of God. In our story today in the Gospel, he hears, God calling. Eli doesn't. Eli doesn't ever hear God calling because he is asleep when he is around God. It takes three times before Eli realizes what's going on. So, Samuel says what? "Speak Lord, I am listening." In other words, "speak Lord, your servant is listening." This is a profound prayer, a profound statement. It means we are open to wanting God's will in our lives. People come to me and say, "Father, how do I know I'm doing the will of God?" And, I tell them, "are you listening?" Do you take time out in your house or wherever you have to turn off all the noise? People come into the rectory when I'm here by myself, to meet with me and they'll say, "Father, it's so quiet." They look around like somebodies going to jump out and attack them. I want it quiet, so I can hear God's will; what God wants me to do. People have so much noise, they have radio, I'm sorry, MP3, and the computer and television. I had one lady say, "Father, do you have a TV in your bedroom?" I said, "no." She said, "how do you sleep?" Didn't make sense to me. She said, "that's the only way I can sleep." I said, "does your husband snore?" "No, I just need a TV to go to sleep." "Okay, never mind." We have too much noise. If we don't remind ourselves to take time out and listen for the voice of God, He is only heard in the quiet. Elijah, the second greatest prophet, was in the desert waiting for God to speak to him. God was not in the earthquake, He was not in the fire, He was not in all the storms. All of a sudden, there was a quiet whispering wind, and he went out and covered his face to talk to God. God will not overpower anything in our lives; we have to be quiet to listen to Him. One time I was contemplating a change in career, back when I was working for an international electronic firm as management. I was thinking about going into being a junior college professor or something. I was praying in front of the blessed Sacrament, and eventually, God told me this. He said this: "I don't care if you become a biological father and get married, I don't care if you become a spiritual father, either one works for Me." Well that wasn't a great answer for what I was asking. God has a sense of humor. I was sitting there thinking, "what do I do now?" All of a sudden it came to me, and I started looking around to see if there was anybody marriageable. And, you know the answer to that question. No. So then I only had one direction to go. I wasn't going to sit around and wait, I needed to make a decision. That's why I'm here, there was nobody I wanted to marry, nobody wanted to marry me so, okay. I listened to the will of God. I listened and he said it didn't matter so I said, "okay, fine." It's not like this one pastor that I had, he was engaged to be married, and she was driving the car down the road, and he had talked to God and God had said, "I want you to be a priest." So, while they're in the car, driving down the road and she's driving, he tells her, "I need to break up with you because God wants me to be a priest." I said, "didn't you feel like an idiot? She could have

1`We have to have quiet, we have to listen. From those two stories you can see, sometimes it's not

popular, the decisions that God lets you make. What I'd like you to think about doing, is this. On your bathroom mirror, because I know that many of you spend an inordinate amount of time in front of it, put, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." Or, "Here am I Lord, I come to do your will." That will make you stop, and think about God. We don't think about God in our society. We think about the latest fashions. Listen to girls today, it's makeup and hair. We think about the latest fads and fashions, we think about Hollywood figures, we think about sports figures. Right now, my Brother is so mad that New England won again. We think about political figures. But, do we ever stop and think and put God in the situation? Our society's not. Maybe if we did, we'd be better off. So put that on your bathroom mirror. Some of us could put it in our refrigerator. So when we're standing there, looking in and we can't find anything, even though it's full, we can think about God. Be creative. Do these things to make sure, once in a while, you wake yourself up to the fact that you need to think about God. Ask God, "what do you want Lord, for me to do? Speak Lord, your servant is listening." And then, take time to be quiet and God Himself will tell you and you won't have to ask me or another priest or anyone else, because God will tell you.

God bless you.