

2nd Sunday Ord. Time (B)
St. Athanasius and St. Francis Parishes
January 17, 18, 2015

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”

Words of today's 2nd Scripture, but that for me at least served as glue to what seemed to be the message of today's two other Scriptures, and also to what I sense happening among us these days.

Last weekend we ended the liturgical celebration of Christmas and, like here at the church, most of you have probably taken apart your Christmas decorations around home. Christmas and events similar are usually pretty happy times for us ... things like weddings, anniversaries, short get-away vacations. Yet even the best and happiest of these can also leave us with a sense of some incompleteness, some restlessness. It is that aspect of *God's Temple of the Holy Spirit within me, you* ... that even the best Christmas, the most wonderful surprise in family, does not quite satisfy.

On the other hand, there are times, and I think we all have them on occasion, when the line between life here and God almost seems to be breached. It never quite is, but at times we do feel a surprising closeness to God. There are simply moments when something of God that may have passed our way at times earlier, just strikes us in a new way. And like the people we meet in today's First Scripture and Gospel text we respond in a way we have not responded earlier.

Samuel was comfortable thinking that it was Eli the prophet who was calling him. One human being calling out to another is something we might expect to happen. But after several attempts at explaining it this way, Samuel is helped to believe that it is not Eli, but that it is really God.

In today's gospel Andrew is one of the followers of John the Baptist. Jesus senses that Andrew is looking for something, that maybe Andrew is not yet even quite aware of about himself. He says to Andrew, “What are you looking for?” and Andrew, maybe caught a bit off guard says, “Where do you live?” Jesus says, “Come and see!”. Eventually Andrew gets in touch with his own brother, Peter, and brings him to Jesus. In both Andrew, Peter and the other disciple that was with Andrew at the start, there is this 'restlessness', this longing and opening to God that has been touched by this at first casual encounter with John the Baptist and then also with Jesus. We all have these Samuel, Eli and Andrew, Peter moments. And we have them because the Holy Spirit dwells within us. There is an element of God that is part of our DNA, and from time to time we respond to words, feelings, experiences in a way that we never did before. The restlessness within us, created by the Holy Spirit, demands our attention and calls forth a deeper response from us than what has ever happened before.

Let me give you some examples of this that I feel happening here in the parish.

- 6 men currently in the Rite of Christian Initiation process why now? What is the movement within these families and individuals that has called this interest forth?
- a few younger families identifying themselves with interest in the parish, and inquiring about Sacraments for themselves or other family members.
- younger and single individuals asking questions about Church, faith, God, and how God is working in their own lives.
- each Wednesday evening families, moms and dads, coming to prayer for a bit with their children prior to going home after Faith Formation classes.

You may see other signs. You may wonder if someone you know is maybe not having a Samuel/Eli moment, an Andrew/Peter moment. These are not to be ignored. These are real. Maybe even as you sit here today, you may be thinking, "I really need to make a move on making my faith a more central part of my whole life." Maybe you have had a twinge of 'restlessness' and not actually been able to figure out what exactly it was. Do not discount that it is of God, and that it deserves your attention.

If you are in middle school, high school, a young adult and are trying to figure out where life may be drawing you, do not discount that God is in that mix. It can be that a vocation to religious life is stirring, that a vocation to priesthood or the diaconate is stirring. Maybe you are thinking about some new way to use your special gifts on behalf of the parish and/or the larger community.

So, for all of us believe that the Holy Spirit lives within you
admit the restlessness that you may experience from time to time
and do not be afraid to name it as God either in yourself or in
someone you know.

There is a movement stirring. I am quite sure it is of God. In the words of today's Psalm Response: *"I have waited, waited for the Lord, and he stooped toward me and heard my cry. And he put a new song into my mouth."*