



## *Reflection from Deacon Ross Beaudoin*

It has been a long time since I have written a Bulletin Column. It has also been a long time since I have been present with the community of St. James for Mass. Some health issues have changed my life and I am hoping that I am “coming through them...” as this new year moves forward.

This week Ben asked me if I was going to write the Bulletin Column for this second Sunday or invite another person to write it. I considered the readings and figured that perhaps the Lord was challenging me to write... so here I am.

The first reading, from the Book of Samuel 3:3b-10, 19 speaks to me. The young Samuel, perhaps 12 years old, was sleeping in the temple. Perhaps not a good look. Nevertheless, Samuel was awakened by the voice of God calling to him. Samuel thought it was the priest of Shiloh, Eli, who was calling. It wasn't Eli. Samuel went back to sleep two more times after hearing calls. Finally, Eli told Samuel to respond “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

Samuel returned to sleep, evidently trusting that he would awaken if the Lord called him. And the Lord did call him again.

Now, Samuel was not a person of status or authority. He was young, from an obscure family. Samuel's mother, Hannah, had begged God to give her a child when she was barren. When that child finally arrived, Hannah named him Samuel and dedicated him to the service of God.

When the Lord called again, Samuel responded. The message that he heard was more than he would have imagined: the Lord was going to reduce the influence of esteemed Eli and re-arrange the leadership of Israel. Samuel was to keep all this to himself. Trusting in the Lord, Samuel went back to sleep – again! [I doubt I would have been able to sleep....]

It wasn't long before Samuel had to make decisions about messages he heard from the Lord. Samuel spoke the words of the Lord even though he knew that there were those who would take offense. That was the beginning of Samuel's ministry of prophecy – which he stuck to for the rest of his life.

One reason this reading speaks to me is that both Hannah and Samuel took risks. Hannah first risked asking God for a child. Then she risked dedicating her child to service in the temple. Samuel, for his part, risked taking to heart God's word to him and acting on it: not just once but throughout life.

AND all of this was put in motion when Hannah and Samuel put their lives on the line by truly listening to the promptings of God in their hearts.

Truly listening to God requires us to set aside our preconceptions and our estimates of the cost-to-me. If God is calling, God will provide the grace for us to respond to the call if our hearts are open.

*Peace,*

*Dcn. Ross*