

SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (B) (2024)  
with thanks to Fr Denis McBride Seasons of the Word (1991) pp. 180-181

A) ELI & HANNAH

- Today's readings are all about introductions, people introducing one person to another
- Today's First Reading is about the boy Samuel, who lived some eleven hundred years before the coming of Christ
- we find him in the Sanctuary of the Lord.
- it's worth explaining how he comes to be there
- the Sanctuary of the Lord was in a place called Shiloh, and it was where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, long before the building of the Temple in Jerusalem
- the Sanctuary is being looked after by an old priest called Eli
- one day he notices a woman praying there whom he takes to be drunk
- she is mouthing words but not speaking aloud
- she explains that she is very unhappy but she is not drunk
- in fact she is childless and longs to have a child
- she promises God that if a male child is born to her she will give him back to serve God all his life.
- Eli is moved by her sad tale: he says that he will pray too, and God will surely answer their prayers.

B) SAMUEL

- Their prayers are answered.
- The woman, Hannah, who had waited so long and prayed so hard, does become a mother.
- She calls her child Samuel, and after she weans him, she brings him to the shrine, leaving him to be brought up by the priests.
- The child helps with the religious services and also looks after Eli, who is now very old.
- When Samuel hears a voice in the night he assumes the old priest is calling him.
- Samuel has no knowledge of the word of God, but the old priest has grown to recognise its strangeness and its power.
- he now introduces the young boy to the word of the Lord.
- and Samuel learns to respond: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."
- Samuel grows up to be the last of the great Judges and the first of the King-makers in Israel, and it is Eli who introduces him to God's word, and to his own vocation.

### C) JOHN THE BAPTIST & ANDREW

- In today's Gospel we see John the Baptist introducing two of his own disciples to Jesus
- in doing this he introduces them to their new future, to a very special vocation.
- The disciples leave the Baptist, they follow Jesus and stay with him.
- John points away from himself, and towards Jesus
- That is his role. "He must increase, I must decrease."
- Andrew is one of the two disciples.
- He needs John the Baptist to point him in the right direction, to make a new start.
- And what John the Baptist did for Andrew, Andrew does for his brother, Simon.
- He shares his experience with Simon, tells him that he has met the Christ, and introduces him to Jesus.
- In the other three Gospels, Andrew is known simply as "the brother of Peter".
- But in the fourth Gospel Andrew has the special function of introducing people to Jesus.
- before the feeding of the five thousand, Andrew discovers a small boy who has five loaves and two fish;
- Andrew introduces the boy to Jesus, who takes the little food, blesses it, and offers it for distribution.
- The last appearance of Andrew is just before the Passover festivities in Jerusalem.
- Some Greeks speak to the apostle Philip and express their desire to meet Jesus.
- Philip tells Andrew, and together they introduce the delegation to Jesus.

### D) OURSELVES

- If we think back to the beginnings of our own Christian faith, we can recall the people who introduced us to Jesus.
- for me it was my mother above all, and then the priests in the parish and the teachers in the school
- and each one of us can probably think of a number of different people who, later on in our journey, introduced us to Jesus in a new way.
- and so the story of Christianity is a story of a great chain of witnesses linked through the apostles to Jesus himself.
- and we too have our own part to play in introducing others to Jesus.
- We don't have to be great missionaries to do this
- if we believe that Jesus is worth knowing, we will bring others into his loving presence by our own quiet witness
- a witness informed by our prayer: SPEAK, LORD, YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING
- and by the example of our lives: WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH. COME AND SEE.