

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jan 10th 2018

In our first reading from Samuel, we learn a great deal about the importance of listening. While Samuel is sleeping he believes he hears Eli calling his name. After responding to Eli several times, Eli instructs Samuel to “Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” So, Samuel follows Eli’s orders and when called upon again he responds accordingly and, by doing so, the LORD accompanied Samuel giving him insight, wisdom, and strength as one of his prophets. Today’s reading underscores the importance of listening. Our lives are full of endless chatter; be that from the TV, radio, our phones, you name it – it seems we are either being bombarded with noise or actively seeking it out, some would say like an addiction, which drowns out our own thoughts and opportunities for meaningful reflection. Our reading from Samuel reminds us that we need to not only listen, but then to be open to what we hear, especially from God. As we open ourselves to the word of God be comforted by Him accompanying us through good times and bad. But, remember, it all begins with listening.

In our second reading from Mark, we see Jesus as a contemplative in action. Jesus performs wondrous acts such as curing the sick with various diseases and driving out demons. We then see the importance of actively seeking out time for reflection and prayer as Jesus goes to a deserted place to pray. As with Samuel, I have to believe that prayer not only re-energized Jesus, but further empowered him to preach and to carry out the healing and humane works of his Father.

As we go through our day, upcoming weeks, and year let us take some time to turn off the chatter – there is a lot of bad news out there both nationally and internationally. Tune out the noise and tune in to taking the opportunity for prayer and reflection. Truly listen and allow God’s words to guide us toward making a positive difference in the lives of those around us and even the world in this New Year.

Michael Kavan-Creighton University's School of Medicine