

29 June 2025 _ Elijah & Elisha...

May the Words of my Mouth and the Meditations of our...

In our first scripture reading from 1 Kings, Elijah hadn't just walked up to Elisha out of the blue. The Holy Spirit had seen something working and growing within Elisha. She had been nurturing those seeds into someone that the Lord was now ready to put to good use.

Crops don't just happen overnight. They need just the right amount of sunlight and time to absorb God's gifts. To develop into something new and pleasing to the Lord.

Elijah strode out into the field where Elisha was plowing, removed the mantle, or cape, from his own shoulders and tossed it over Elisha's sweaty shoulders.

Elisha did not immediately follow Elijah, but neither did he pause to consider. He asked only to be permitted to kiss his father and mother, so as not to leave them wondering where he had gone. But Elisha didn't hesitate to follow Elijah.

Elisha would go on to follow Elijah, learning and growing closer to the Lord. And after Elijah had been taken up into the heavens in a chariot of fire, Elisha put on Elijah's mantel, and would fill

Elijah's sandals as a major prophet... And Elisha would face off against kings and kingdoms.

So, why am I up here in front of you?

I didn't just wake up one morning and think to myself, you know, I wanna stand up in front of a bunch of people... and bare my inner thoughts and life's stories to them!

I had long decided, over the years, that I didn't ever want to become a priest.

I never truly felt such a call. Not that I wasn't feeling something... but wearing a collar just wasn't it.

But something must have been working within me for others to notice and make them begin to wonder.

There are some people out there who have the ability to sense when those seeds have been planted within our hearts, and when, just maybe, we are being called to do something special by the Holy Spirit.

And then someone spies that tiny tip of a sprout.

And the possibilities for just what those sprouts might grow into...

Going back fifteen years ago to my early years at St Hilda St Patrick in Edmonds:

One Sunday morning, standing in my Eucharistic Minister alb at the back of the church with Mother Cynthia Espeseth during the Prelude, she turned to look at me, and asked, "have you ever thought about preaching?"

That caught me off guard! With a laugh in my eyes, I blurted, "Nope!" No hesitation...

A few months later, again at the back of church during the prelude, Mother Cynthia touched my arm and quietly asked me, "are you ready yet?"

Again, I answered, "Nope!" but she came back with, "You really should."

I asked her "why" and she told me, "because you have a lot of stories to tell, so many thoughts to share."

I didn't reply, but I did absorb what she had said.

Another few months later, the *same* scenario, Mother Cynthia, without even looking at me, bumped her shoulder against mine,

and asked again, "Are you ready yet?" And yet again I answered, *not quite as convincingly*, "Nope."

And then, yet another few months later, Mother Cynthia told us that something personal come up for the weekend. She said there were no supply priests available on short notice, and so it was decided that we would instead to do Morning Prayer.

I had been trained to lead Morning Prayer, and Deacon Phyllis McCormick said that she would be *happy* to Preach.

No problem...

And then, at 10 pm on the Friday evening, I got an ominous phone call – from Deacon Phyllis.

"I'm not going to be to be able to be there on Sunday..."

Silence on my part... Deep breath.

Phyllis sounded *absolutely horrible*. She told me that she had her sermon notes ready... and she would gladly send them to me – if I wanted to look at them... and that *maybe* I could think about preaching on Sunday morning – "but no pressure..."

I was far more concerned for her than I was for myself at that moment.

I told her, "Sure. Go ahead. I will look through them and see if I can work with them."

The Gospel for that Sunday was about Jesus calling Andrew to follow him...

How appropriate...

On Sunday morning, I stepped up to the lectern, asked the Holy Spirit's words to be with me, took yet another deep breath, and gave my first sermon.

After I had spoken my last words, an intense feeling washed over me. I looked upwards – and I whispered the words, "You win..."

In hindsight, I had never at any point said, "stop asking me," just "nope" – or "why?" I wasn't closing any doors. I guess I just needed that right moment.

Then the Holy Spirit took control.

The Lord calls us to do lots of stuff in life, but we, in our busy lives, love to pull out our calendars and say, "Maybe I can squeeze you in next Sunday after, say, 2 o'clock..."

Yes, but...

I know that I'm good at whipping out that phrase. "Yes, but..."

I suspect that I'm not the only one here who uses it.

We are each called. We don't always recognize it – or we are unwilling – or perhaps afraid to accept it.

Sometimes, it takes others who have been sensing that the Holy Spirit has been calling us. They gently call our attention to that fact, no matter how much we may wish to deny it.

It can be quite daunting when we start hearing rumblings that the Holy Spirit might have bigger plans for us... We start frantically hunting for that PAUSE button.

Where did I hide that darn thing!!!

Sometimes we really struggle to find the courage to step out on that shaky limb – and finally say – “yes, Lord.”

We can choose to fight it, ... but we already know who's going to win *that* argument.

We don't see the Holy Spirit. We feel Her, like a gentle breeze, nudging us, guiding us wherever She wishes us to go...

Who is your own personal Elijah?

Come, Holy Spirit. Fill the hearts of thy faithful and enkindle within us the Fire of Thy divine Love.