

January 14, 2024

May I speak in the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

January already seems to have gone on quite some time. In the midst of what is often a dreary month, our readings today offer us a vision to inspire us, a reminder of the heart of our faith, a picture of the worship of heaven in which we participate even as we worship here on earth.

The vision of angels descending and ascending upon the Son of Man recalls the tradition that as we worship, and especially as we celebrate the Eucharist, God's very presence with us the bread and wine of the Eucharist, Christ's body and blood, the angels of God ascending and descending to and from heaven to encounter Christ in the Eucharist as they gaze on the face of the one in the Eucharist which in heaven they cannot yet see face to face.

Our second reading paints us another picture of heaven. Here we see not the angels of heaven in eternity, but the elders and saints gone before us who enjoy that heavenly glory in which we all one day hope to share.

The image of incense here reflects the prayers of the saints, even as our incense reminds us of the heavenly reality of our worship and the prayers of our eucharist ascending to heaven, even as we are surrounded by the prayers of the saints who pray for us even now and whom we too can ask for prayer. Mary, our Lady, and Peter, our Patron, and all God's saints as we pray each Sunday.

These visions held before us by our readings, these reminders of what we do in our worship, as we share here on earth in what we one day shall share eternally in heaven, inspire us even in these dreary days of January - whether we've kept them dry or rather moist.

Our first reading reminds us that even in days which seem dreary, days in which the word of the Lord seem rare; visions not widespread the voice of the Lord is still calling us even in the midst of our dreariness. Even in these days we're called to be open to the voice of God. It's never too late to hear the voice of God. Even Samuel who is too young in the world's eyes. Even Eli, who is too old and whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see. Even they, who just needed a lie down, were able to discern the voice of God.

Samuel needs the help of Eli to discern God's call, just as our readings this morning help to hold before us the heavenly reality of our worship to inspire us to hear God's call, the incense of our prayers and the communion we share with the Saints upon whose intercession we rely for help and to whom we can turn for prayer when we struggle to hear the voice of God ourselves.

So as we continue through January are can we hear the still small voice of the one calling us by name.

The one who has called us to this place,

the one whom we shall soon meet in bread and in wine,

the one who sends us out even into the dreariness of January, inspired by the worship of heaven, to listen for that still small voice of his call,

even if we feel we're too young,

even if we feel too old and our vision has faded and our eyesight grown dim,

even if we just need a lie down.

Even then he comes to us and calls us by name. Amen.