

## JANUARY 14, 2026 FATHER VIJAI AMIRTHARAJ

On a Saturday night this pastor of a Pentecostal church, named "Almighty God Church," was working in the church office, preparing for the next day. He decided to call his wife before he left for home. It was about 10:00 PM. But his wife did not answer the phone. He thought it was odd that she did not answer, but decided to wrap up a few things, and try again in a few minutes.

And when he tried again, his wife answered right away. He asked her why she hadn't answered before, and she said that the phone did not ring in their house. They brushed it off as a fluke, and went on their way.

The following Monday, the pastor received a call at the church office, in the phone that he had used that Saturday night. The man who called wanted to know why he had called him that Saturday night. The pastor couldn't figure out what the guy was talking about. The guy said, "It rang and rang, but I didn't answer." The pastor then remembered the mishap, and apologized for disturbing the man, explaining that he had intended to call his wife.

The man said, "That's okay, let me tell you my story. You see, I was planning to commit suicide that Saturday night. But before I did, I prayed: 'God, if you are there, and if you don't want me to do this, give me a sign right now.' And at that point, the phone started to ring. I looked at the caller ID, and it said, 'Almighty God.' I was afraid to answer."

Sisters and brothers, today the first reading speaks of God's call to Samuel. When God first called Samuel, and his name, Samuel does not ignore the voice of God, he just doesn't think that it would be God who

is on the other end of the line. He needed the help of Eli to know that it was indeed God who was calling him.

Now throughout the Bible, we read stories about people being called by God. And most often, God called people for a particular mission. For example, God called Moses to go to Pharaoh, and free God's people, who were enslaved by him. God called Jonah, to go to Nineveh, and to proclaim the message of repentance to the people there. God called Samuel, to announce to Eli the sentence that God was going to give to Eli's son, for their wicked way of life. And in the New Testament, God called Mary, to be the Mother of God's Son. And Jesus himself was sent into the world to be the comforting and healing presence of God. And as we heard in today's Gospel, Jesus went about, village to village, healing people and comforting people.

Sisters and brothers, God has called each of us, through our baptism. And he has called to do his mission. In our baptism, the priest utters these words: "As Christ was anointed priest, prophet, and king, so you may live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life." So today, in 2026, we are the people to whom the mission of God has been entrusted.

However, when it comes to doing God's missions, sometimes we can be afraid, and we feel inadequate for the mission. For example, when God called Moses, Moses said, "Here I am. Send Aaron." When God called Jonah, Jonah said, "Where is the next whale in the opposite direction?" And when God called Mary, she said, "How is it possible?" However, as we may have heard, God doesn't always call the qualified, but always qualifies the called. That is what God did with all those individuals. And that is what God is doing with each of us today. God is giving us the

strength, and the courage, and the gifts that we need to do the mission of God today.

So, as we come to this Eucharist, let us open our hearts, and receive the grace of God, to continue the work of God in our world.

Amen.