

January 18, 2022
Tuesday of the 2nd Week
1 Sam 16:1-13
Mk 2:23-28

Let's put ourselves in Samuel's shoes in today's first reading. Samuel was Israel's last judge, a position that made him the political and the spiritual leader of Israel. But the people wanted a king, so the Lord led Samuel to anoint Saul as king. Thus, the people had a new political leader, but Samuel remained their spiritual leader.

Saul's reign began well. He was a good and inspirational leader. But as so often happens, power corrupts, and by the time the events of today's first reading unfold, Saul has worn out his welcome. Even God is exasperated with him.

So, God asks Samuel to anoint a new king. Samuel must have experienced a pretty serious Mylanta moment over this turn of events. Basically, God is calling Samuel to commit treason. If Saul gets wind of what is about to go down it will be off with Samuel's head.

But God assures Samuel of His protection, so Samuel sets off on his appointed mission to find and anoint a new king of Israel.

As soon as Samuel sets eyes on Jesse's first son, Eliab, Samuel is sure this is the one. But God doesn't see it the way Samuel sees it. Man does not see as God sees because while man sees appearances, the Lord looks into the heart. So, guided by God, Samuel ultimately anoints David, the unlikeliest of choices in the eyes of man.

So, for me, today's story about Samuel anointing David raises some questions: How do we choose our kings? How do we choose what, or who, will rule our lives?

Do we choose on our own? I know nothing about Eliab, but left up to Samuel, there might have been a King Eliab and not a King David. But Samuel has placed his trust entirely in God, including risking his life by anointing a king when there already is a king.

How much risk are we willing to take by placing our trust in God?

When we were babies, and we all were once upon a time, we entrusted our entire beings to our parents. Of course, we had no choice in the matter. But as I look around here this morning, it appears to me that trust turned out to be well-placed and things came out OK. Can we now, voluntarily, place that same level trust in God?

As I think most of you know, the Kauai Deacon Community just finished a spiritual retreat. We had a Jesuit retreat master who imparted to us a piece of Ignatian spirituality that goes something like this: The purpose of our lives should be to live forever with God. It

seems to me that eternity for us begins with our conception, not with our death, so no need to wait any longer to work on accomplishing the purpose of our lives.

To accomplish that purpose, it seems to me that we should endeavor to place that same unconditional trust in God that we placed in our parents when we were conceived, that moment when God breathed life into us. Such trust is hard to come by for us humans, likely impossible for us. But with the help of God, may we never stop trying. With the help of God, may we become more and more trusting in God, just like Samuel. With the help of God, may we accomplish the purpose of our lives.