

Day 2

Where Are You? Prayer in the Old Testament



For Personal Reflection & Prayer

- Recall a recent time when you have tried to hide from God.
Have you ever sensed the Lord calling out to you?
- How have I sought out the Lord, like Elijah? Do I desire to see His face?

Take these considerations to the Lord in prayer, asking for light and strength.

Offer a prayer inspired by the words of Scripture:

*When they heard the sound of the Lord God
walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day,
the man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.
The Lord God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you?
He answered, "I heard you in the garden;
but I was afraid...so I hid."*

Genesis 3: 8-10

St. John Paul II on Prayer

...Therefore, if God, through his Spirit, communicates himself to man, man is continuously called to give himself to God with his whole being. This is his deepest vocation... Down the centuries, all the generous and sincere efforts of human intelligence and freedom to draw close to the ineffable and transcendent mystery of God are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Particularly in the history of the Old Covenant made by Yahweh with the people of Israel, we see this meeting between God and man gradually taking place within the communion disclosed by the Spirit.

For example, there is the striking and intensely beautiful account of the prophet Elijah's encounter with God in the breath of the Spirit: "And [the Lord] said: 'Go forth, and stand



upon the mount before the Lord'. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him, and said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' (1 Kgs 19:11-13).

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_26081998.html

The Holy Monastery of Prophet Elijah

The Holy Monastery of Prophet Elijah is on the way to Bethlehem. The monastery was built by Patriarch Elijah in the 6th century and after recurring destructions it was reconstructed by Byzantine Emperor Manuel Komnenos in 1160 A.D. The monastery was met with more structural damages due to the war assaults. In 1860 The Patriarchate saw to its full restoration, while another refurbishment took place by the memorable Archbishop of Ashkelon, Arkadios. The monastery has kept many traditions such as the following;

- The three Wise Men from the East had reached the site of the Monastery having lost their way, when suddenly they saw a bright star redirecting them towards the birthplace of Christ. Near the monastery there is the cistern of the Wise Men...
- Prophet Elijah had slept on that place on his attempt to escape the rage of the irreverent king Ahab and his wife Jezebel. An angel of the Lord told him then: "Arise, eat because the journey is too great for you" (1 Kings 19:7)...

On Christmas Eve, the Patriarch with the Holy Synod, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and faithful people start the procession from Jerusalem to Bethlehem with a stopover at the Monastery of Prophet Elijah. Then they continue their way to the Church of the Nativity for Great Vespers.

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/holy-pilgrimage-sites/holy-bethlehem/>

