

Serving Berlin's English-speaking Catholic Community since 1957



## ***Catholic Community***

### **Member of the English-Speaking Mission**

Interfaith Community Center • Hüttenweg 46 • 14195 Berlin-Dahlem

Phone (030) 86203636 • Fax (030) 86203638

Email: [allsaintsberlin@t-online.de](mailto:allsaintsberlin@t-online.de) / Website: [www.all-saints-berlin.de](http://www.all-saints-berlin.de)

Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 10-12

**Our Mission Statement:** The All Saints Catholic Community is a fully integrated, multicultural community with English as its unifying language. It is an open, warm, welcoming, inclusive community that prays together and celebrates its unity in diversity.

### **August 16, 2015 Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Readings (*Missalette* p 46 et seqq.): Prov 9:1-6 • Ps 34:2-7 • Eph 5:15-20 • Jn 6:51-58**

**Celebrant: Fr. Wolfgang Schonecke MAfr**

All Saints looks forward to welcoming **Fr. Sylvester Ajunwa**, the new head of the English-Speaking Mission in Berlin!

Fr. Sylvester Ajunwa was born in 1969 in Nigeria and was ordained in 1997. He has been in Germany since 2007 and earned his doctorate in Pastoral Theology from the University of Würzburg. He currently works in Bad Kissingen.

### **Are we willing to change directions when God's breezy voice breaks into our lives?**

As believers, as friends of Jesus we wish to follow him. For this we need strength and determination. Today's first reading (**I Kings 19:4-8**) brings up a unique problem in our following of God, in our following of Jesus. Elijah discovers that God doesn't always lead him along the most direct route. Sometimes God even changes his destination, his intention! Our I Kings passage actually provides us with just the middle of a three part narrative.

The whole account begins with a confrontation between the prophets of the fertility god Ba'al and Elijah on Mt. Carmel. Elijah wins the confrontation, he has his rivals put to death, then he must quickly run for his life when Queen Jezebel puts a contract out on him. Queen Jezebel is the patroness of the pagan prophets – they had been on her payroll.

Elijah travels – on foot – from Palestine's northernmost point (Mt. Carmel) to its southernmost point (the Sinai). Many tourists do this tour – mainly in busses with air condition. Here, in the southernmost point of Israel, in the Sinai, today's passage kicks in. Physically unable to go any further, Elijah actually asks God to kill him: "*Take my life,*" he pleads, "*for I am no better than my fathers.*" Fortunately God ignores his request and twice sends an angel with "*a cake baked on hot stones, and a jug of water*". In this way, God makes certain that the prophet has enough strength to "*walk forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, to Horeb*" which is Mt. Sinai in the South of Palestine.

The difficulty arises in the third part of the story. When Elijah finally reaches Mt. Sinai, God comes to him in a "*gentle breeze*" and God abruptly informs him that he is in the wrong place! Instead of preaching to the scorpions in the wilderness, God wants him in Syria - north of where he originally started his trek – setting up a mechanism to get rid of

Jezebel. At first glance, this change in direction makes sense. All of us have had to make changes in the paths we have chosen in life. But there's a unique problem with this change here in the story of Elijah: by twice sending an angel with food and water, God actually helped Elijah go in the wrong direction! Since the prophet couldn't have made it to Sinai without God's assistance, God is responsible for Elijah's ending up in a place God didn't want him to be.

The author who wrote Ephesians (**Eph 4:30-5:2**), a disciple of Paul, makes sense when he encourages his readers to get rid of "*all bitterness, fury, anger, shouting and reviling.*" As Christians, as friends of Jesus who want to follow him, who want to be like him, we agree that we should be "*kind to one another, compassionate, and forgiving.*" Yet Elijah would remind us that true discipleship goes further than just creating peaceful, compassionate relationships with one another. It also includes developing a relationship with a God who sometimes messes with our spiritual GPS.

Jewish members of the community of John, the evangelist, had to deal with a parallel experience when they converted to Christianity (**John 6:41-51**). As good Jews they had been constantly encouraged to distinguish between the "*sacred and the profane.*" We presume that through the centuries before Christ it was God who helped the Chosen People reach the point in their faith lives when that division between sacred and profane became an essential part of everyone and everything they encountered.

Yet now, as followers of the risen Jesus, they have discovered the most sacred of persons is actually in an individual whose "*father and mother we know.*" No dedicated Israelite could ever have anticipated that God would one day ask his followers to drastically change directions and realize that a carpenter from Capernaum had become the "*bread of life*" for all people.

Almost every biblical author encourages us to make visible, to live according to the distinct path God wishes each and every one of us to travel through life. Yet, Elijah's Sinai experience also teaches us to keep our eyes and ears open, willing to change directions at any moment God's breezy voice breaks into our lives.

cf. <http://fosionline.com/index.php?pagekey=roger#0809>

**Fr Wolfgang Felber SJ**

**Welcome to All Saints! Many of us are gone for the summer and return in August but would like to welcome you to our community. A few events to look forward to:**

- **First Communion/Confirmation Parent's Meeting on Sunday, August 30th after Mass. Contact Jenny: [jgebhar@yahoo.de](mailto:jgebhar@yahoo.de)**
- **Fall Family Bazaar on Saturday, September 5th. Contact Heide: [h.doblhofer@t-online.de](mailto:h.doblhofer@t-online.de)**
- **Welcome BBQ Potluck on Sunday, September 13th after Mass. Please bring a side-dish.**

**[www.bildungsspender.de/all-saints-berlin](http://www.bildungsspender.de/all-saints-berlin)**

**THANK YOU!** Please **CONTINUE** to support **All Saints Community Life** through our fundraising site at **[www.bildungsspender.de/all-saints-berlin](http://www.bildungsspender.de/all-saints-berlin)** at no extra cost. It's easy! Shop at one of more than 1500 online shops through this website & All Saints receives a DONATION for every transaction made! The total this year up to now is 1.038 EUR!

**Friends of All Saints e.V.** IBAN: DE15 3706 0193 6001 6690 18, BIC: GENODED1PAX

**Directions to All Saints:** **Subway:** U 3, Oskar-Helene-Heim (10-min. walk) or S 1, Zehlendorf, then bus. • **Bus:** Bus 285: stop Am Waldfriedhof (last stop, 2-min. walk); bus 110 or 623: stop Oskar-Helene-Heim (10-min. walk) or bus 115: stop Hüttenweg (5-min. walk). • **Car:** A115 Avus highway, Hüttenweg exit or Clayallee (<http://berlinonline.de/citymap>)