#HereIAmLord -Andrew Nelmes

Hi, my name is Andrew Haydn Nelmes and I’m aged 56. I’ve been married to Rachel for 30 years, she is currently the children, youth and family advisor for our diocese. We have a son Sam, and he is a social care worker, as a family we live in the Rhymney Valley with Flynt, a saluki cross greyhound. I have worked for the last nineteen years for a carpet manufacturer but last September I took redundancy to study full-time.

My sense of calling came back in 1997, it was definite, I was not expecting it. My sense of calling came as I heard God’s word being preached. I knew that God had called me. This sense of ‘calling’ became part of me, it has never left me.

Initially I did nothing about my sense of calling, however, over time it was confirmed through others and I knew, that I knew, that God had called. I was encouraged and believed that in the fulness of time, God would reveal what this call would be for. For me this experience has been a long journey of discovery and study, my calling was definite. Looking back, it was providential.

As a Christian, I had always enjoyed reading God’s word and attended local bible studies, but I wanted to learn more. So, I researched some online courses, due to my commitments, I began studying theology, I completed a BTh and then Post Graduate Diploma and I have just submitted my dissertation for the MTh.

In 2013 I began to explore vocation and the Rector initially encouraged me to experience the diversity of spirituality in the Church in Wales and arranged for me to visit different congregations and chat with licensed ministers and priests. These conversations that I had over time, helped me to slowly move into a new ‘space.’ The inward witness, circumstances and what others have said have all help to guide my response to God’s call. I have always felt supported by those in leadership, they have been willing to encourage me to where it felt comfortable but did not push me beyond that point where I lost my inner peace. The DDO always encouraged me to keep an open mind to where God eventually might lead me.

I have found exploring vocation has its ups and downs, as Christians God calls us to carry our cross to become more like Jesus. Nevertheless, God in his love knows what he has created us for, and it is only in his purpose that we can find fulfillment. We are all brought into the place were God wants us to be through circumstances and opportunities.

I began training as a Reader last year, and by being a part of St Padarn’s community, through self-evaluation and change of circumstances, I have become more aware that perhaps God is calling me to ordained ministry. Originally, I was exploring ordination, but I got overwhelmed and put the ‘brakes on’ and then asked to go forward as a Reader, because preaching was in my comfort zone. I enjoy sharing my faith and encouraging others inside and outside the church.

I have learnt that as a person; I desire to please God and I do not want to rush before him. It is wiser to take one step at a time and enjoy the journey. God has a plan for our lives, this unfolds over time, I have learnt to be patient. My circumstances at work allowed me not only to support my family but also to be pastorally active and continue to study. God in is omniscience prepares us for what he has called us for, however, as finite beings we fulfill his purpose one day at a time. I am currently going through the selection process for ordination, as I seek to continue to discern God’s purpose for my life.

For anyone who feel they are being called; I would encourage you to respond to that call and talk with your priest, do not delay and start to explore your call today and remember to enjoy the journey!

But I would also add to those who may not feel called, they should also be open to the fact that God calls us all in different ways. Have you been approached by others? Do you have talents and gifts to offer to others? The discernment process will help determine the answer to whether God is calling you to licensed or ordained ministry too.

