

CHURCH OF THE MAGDALEN

Wednesday #2: Discerning God's voice
Talking vs. Listening
January 12, 2022

The Holy Spirit speaks a language of silence. It's a language our heart recognizes from within..

God's voice sounds a lot like our voice...because He dwells within us. What seems to be particular about discerning the difference between what's just some thought coming from us, and those thoughts or feelings or ideas coming from God:

- The thoughts, ideas, or images that we receive from God tend to surprise us. We weren't expecting them..because it wasn't coming from us!
- The thoughts, feelings, desires, and impulses that come to us from God are always calm, gentle, loving, and compassionate. They might be very direct; they might lead us towards some kind of change or new invitation about living...but they are never belittling or condescending. God deals in love.
- Oftentimes, one of the first received gifts we notice in prayer is a sense of awareness of God's presence, that we are not alone. Sometimes truths are illuminated, and we suddenly know something, believe something, or feel inclined to do something.
- No matter what we find ourselves doing or thinking about in prayer—if you sense a subtle, gentle peace—stop what you're doing and attend to that peace. Be present to that peace! God is the Prince of Peace, and He promised to give us His peace. If you're noticing it- let yourself go there and be with Him. He's calling out to you.

Our prayer life should be grounded in:

- Longing to be with Christ
- Making a sacrifice of our time, praise, and thanksgiving.
- When in doubt, pull we our Bible out.

Helpful reminder: Our prayer deepens to the extent that our living of the Gospel deepens. If we desire more in prayer, let us consider how we are living! One transforms and renews the other.

For reflection from *He Leadeth Me* by Walter Ciszek

The main character, reflecting on his past, says, "Up, until now, I had always seen my role— man's role— in the divine economy as an active one. Up to this time, I had retained in my own hands the reins of all decisions, actions, and endeavors..."

Then, reflecting on what he has learned, he says, "I realized I had been trying to do something with my own will and intellect that was at once too much and mostly all wrong. God's will was not hidden somewhere "out there" in the situations in which I found myself; the situations themselves were his will for me. What he wanted was for me to accept these situations as from his hands, to let go of the reins and place myself entirely at his disposal. He was asking of me an act of total trust, allowing for no interference or restless striving on my part, no reservations, no exceptions, no areas where I could set conditions or seem to hesitate. He was asking for a complete gift of self, nothing held back. It demanded absolute faith; faith in God's existence, in his providence, in his concern for the smallest detail, in his power to sustain me, and in his love protecting me. It meant losing the last hidden doubt, the ultimate fear that God would not be there to bear you up. It was something like that awful eternity between anxiety and belief when a child first leans back and lets go of all support whatever— only to find that the water truly holds him up and he can float motionless and totally relaxed."

Guided Meditation: Discerning God's Voice

1. Enter in: Make the sign of the Cross and become aware of God's presence.
 - a. Deep breath. Relax those shoulders. Get comfy in the pew.
 - b. Take a full minute to look at Jesus on the altar, and let Him look at you.
 - c. Ask God in your own words to be with you during your time of prayer. Ask Him to reveal Himself to you, to let you know that He's with you.
 2. Start the conversation. Tell God what's on your mind, what's in your heart at this moment.
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3. Get quiet and listen. Great work. Now, it's His turn. Set your pen down. Say to the Lord from your heart, **"Here I am, Lord. Speak; your servant is listening"** (1 Samuel 3:10). Now close your eyes, and listen from within. Listen with an expectant hope- that God *is* going to find a way to reach you right now.
 - a. If you get distracted (totally normal and fine), just quietly return your attention to the task of reaching out for God. You could try:
 - i. Try a physical posture that aligns with your interior disposition: sit with your palms up and open, your knuckles resting on your lap-, like you're ready to receive something.
 - ii. Repeat the above phrase from Scripture.
 4. When the time seems right, engage again with a dialogue: Say to the Lord from your heart, "Jesus, this is what I'm noticing so far about my time with you:"
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5. Get quiet and listen again. Remember, God speaks in many different ways. He might be trying to teach you how to find Him in a new way, better than before. If you're afraid you're not sure what you're doing—that's okay! Jesus' friends always called him "Rabbi," Hebrew for "Great teacher." Let Him teach you.
6. Respond with faith:
 - a. Jesus, I noticed: _____
 - b. Jesus, I need: _____
 - c. Jesus, I give You: _____
 - d. Jesus, thank you for: _____

Amen!

