

“Peace is...listening for the Word of God”

1Kings 19: 12,13 *“...there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.”*

Psalms 85:9 *“I will hear what God proclaims; the LORD – for he proclaims peace to his people.”*

Matthew 14:27 *Jesus spoke to them, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.”*

Reflection:

In faith, Peter asked the Lord for help, and *“immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught [him].”* The wind subsided once they got into the boat. Those on the boat witnessed what had happened and said, *“Truly, you are the Son of God.”* We often look for a “Wow” event to see God at work in our lives. But we see in the first reading that God was present in the tiny whispering sound. He was not in the strong wind or in the earthquake or in the fire. We have to train ourselves to listen to God where He is present, including deep inside our own hearts. It is often in our quiet moments that we realize what we are being called to do. If we are open to God, we can also hear Him speaking to us through people and events in our lives. A simple word from someone can help us to see that God is trying to reach us. What does it take for us to hear Him?

When we hear the Lord speaking to us, we need to have the courage to respond to His call. Peter started walking on the water, but when he took his focus off of Christ, and relied on himself to continue, he faltered. Peter realized that he could not do it by himself and called upon the Lord, just as we need to do. God always calls us. He always asks us to do things we are capable of, with his help. It is when we rely on ourselves and forget to rely on God that we, too, falter. The Lord is always there to assist us. We need to listen to and rely on Jesus, who stretched out His arms to save us. It is the Lord; we need not be afraid.

Finally, how do we listen to God speaking to us in the justice and peace issues of our times? Do we hear the voices of the immigrants whose families are being torn apart due to laws that do not fairly meet the needs of the people? Do we hear the millions in East Africa who have little or no food due to famine? Do we hear the cries of the fetuses who are torn from their mothers before they have a chance to be born and to be loved? How do we hear the “tiny whispering sound” of God's voice amid the clamor that often surrounds these issues? How do we quiet the many voices within us so that we can listen to God?

Action:

- *Develop a sense of listening. Commit to 5 minutes a day of quiet listening. Realize that it takes time and practice to train yourself to listen and to “tune out” the distractions.*
- *Set aside time to listen to Relevant Radio, 950 AM, perhaps to a particular show while driving.*
- *Visit a neighbor or friend, and focus on actively listening.*
- *Spend time looking at the stars on a clear night, maybe with a loved one. Appreciate the gifts of summer.*
- *Read the readings for next Sunday. Then listen carefully to the priest's homily on Sunday.*
[Readings for Aug 14 are: Isaiah 56:1, 6-7; Psalm 67:2-3,5,6,8; Romans 11:13-15, 29-32; Matthew 15:21-28. Or go to <http://www.usccb.org/nab> and click on the date of the readings you need.]
- *Read some scripture passages that refer to listening: Matthew 10:14-15; Mark: 4:3,12,18,20,24; Luke 9:35; Luke 16:31; John 4:35; Deuteronomy 28:1-2...; Jeremiah7:23...; Isaiah 49:1...*
- *Listen to the voices of the less fortunate, the underserved, those who have no ‘political’ voice, and ask God what He would have you do in response. Then listen for God's guidance in your heart.*

“Be still and know that I am God” ~ Ps. 46:11