

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Jun 10th 2016

The first reading today from the Book of Kings is one of my favorite passages in the bible. Fleeing for his life, the prophet Elijah comes to a cave to hide. There, “the word of the Lord” came to him and challenged him to go out and stand on the mountain before God.

Elijah’s task was to discover God there. But what is most fascinating in the reading is that God does not appear in what might be considered a “normal” appearance. At first, there was a “great and strong wind” that crushed the rocks on the mountaintop; but the Lord was not there. Then, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in that terrifying and magnificent event. Finally, there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the conflagration. Where (or how) was the Lord to be discovered, then?

Each of these wonderful, awesome events, cyclonic wind, rock-rending earthquake, and destroying fire speak of great power and authority. Events like this are more typical of the bible’s image of God and how God is manifested in all magnificence.

However, it was only after these occurrences that God’s presence was shown in a “still, small voice.” Only then did Elijah the Prophet cover his face in reverence and exit the cave to hear God’s special word to him, a word that sent him back to his people to continue to bring to them message of conversion.

What strikes me is how often we (may I speak for many of us here?) look for God in the marvelous, the masterful, and the magnificent and miss the “quiet, still voice” of God’s word that so gently, but so wonderfully comes to us. What a challenge it is to be tuned in to the word of God, a word that invites, encourages and challenges us as we continue to work out our life of faith, hope, and love given so generously in our baptism!

We discover God’s challenging and life-giving word in the day-to-day events of our lives; discovered in a special way in the people family, friends, and the many others that populate our daily lives. Like Elijah, once we recognize God’s word, let us reverently attend to the meaning of that word in our lives. How does that word of God (God’s presence) invite us and challenge us to a deeper awareness of who we are and how we have been blessed?

Lord, render me open to your word as the Prophet Elijah was. Help me to discover your word especially amid the noise and fury of my life which tends to drown out your word, that quiet, still voice that I need so much to hear, and, yet most often miss.

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