

Deacon Tom Homilies ©
Hearing the Voice of God – Day Five
FRIDAY 08/25/06 SPEAK LORD

This week, we've talked about hearing the voice of God in our lives. And all this week – the readings for the Masses help focus on the fact that men and women have tried to be attentive to God since.... Well, forever! This morning – those words from Ezekiel... “The hand of the LORD came upon me, and led me out **in the Spirit...**” And in the Responsorial – “They cried to the LORD in their distress... and He rescued them. He led them ... to reach an inhabited city.”

Need we think that in that first reading – that Ezekiel was physically led somewhere? Perhaps so – but it says ‘and led me out in the Spirit.’ And in the Responsorial – He led them by a direct way to reach their destination. Is it necessary that they were physically led somewhere? The greater lesson is that God is always with us... always, communicating with us... if we but listen. The words of a favorite hymn come to me... “Yahweh – I know you are there... ever standing at my side....” The words comfort me --touch my heart...

In earlier homilies – we discussed different ways that we believe God speaks to us. It is important to briefly mention the Church and, especially the Sacraments and liturgies as conduits for communication with and from God. It is impossible – it is completely and totally impossible to practice our faith and participate often in the Catholic liturgies and Sacraments without God speaking to us. Guaranteed! Last Saturday – I responded to an inner urging to go to Confession. I responded to this ‘spiritual nagging’ or ‘invitation’ – and here is what happened.

A priest was walking around outside of the Confessional. When I asked about Confession, he went inside the box. I did the opening, recited a narration of my sins... He said to me to 'say some prayers' and told me to make an act of Contrition. No words of encouragement – no spiritual correction – no inquiry about my sins... just 'say some prayers.' I came out – started a Rosary as my self-assigned penance... and I wasn't very far into it when I found myself asking, "Lord – what was this all about? Why did this happen?" It came upon me – these words in my mind: "The grace of this sacrament is not found in the priest. It is my grace to give to you. Forgiveness is from me. All I wanted you to do was to repent of, and confess your sins." Boom! Immediate relief. Immediate healing. Immediate peace.

I wanted to share this with you because of a parishioner experience – one passed on to me in recent hours. This lady told me of a way that God was speaking to her. And the lady brought up the point about saying 'Yes to God.' Saying YES to God -- that is what we need to do to be in more communication with God – to hear his voice in our mind and in our heart. That's what my Confession experience told me.

I keep a file of my homilies – the daily and the Sunday homilies. I do this in the hope that next year, or three years from now when the same readings are used, I will be able to use a homily over again. But it hardly ever works out that way. Each time the passages are proclaimed, God says something new.

So I have perhaps 1,200 computer files and some four or five binders of homilies in a closet. I wonder if the Lord will speak to me and tell me what to do with these?

Hearing the voice of God is as natural as when an idea comes into your mind. In fact, that's often exactly how He speaks. A thought occurs to you -- something you've never thought of before--and it leads you to some kind of action that either answers a prayer or helps someone else who's in trouble. The Good God may simply continue to remind us of something -- nudge us until we open up to His grace and opportunity. God speaks to us in the natural moments of life. Do you want to hear God's voice? To do so, we must be ready to listen. Here are some preparation tips.

Know that you do want to hear Him. Tell Him so. Speak Lord -- your servant is listening. God speaks to those who come to Him in Jesus' name. "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father" (John 14:13). He also speaks to us for specific purposes. The Bible says this about God's Word: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Sometimes, we may not like what we hear... but God loves us -- and what He speaks to us is for our own good.

Well -- I would like to go on for days on this subject -- alas -- the Lord has told me that time is up for today, and for this week. May each of you hear His voice today and every day.