



## Thought For The Week

Scriptures:

1 Kings 19:9,11-13 • Romans 9: 1-5 • Matthew 14: 22-33

It has often occurred to me when I observe natural disasters happening around the world each day, I say to myself you have been a very fortunate man: I have never experienced a tornado as the folks in Oklahoma and Arkansas and other states have; I have never been caught in a forest fire as some in California have; I have never been caught in a hurricane as the folks in New Jersey and New York experienced some years back. But I can imagine one thing that all these natural events have in common: they were accompanied by noise and chaos that surely must have caused great fear and even the thought of imminent death.

All that came to mind when I first read the story of Elijah attempting to escape the call of God to be a prophet. He is standing there looking out over the world from the entrance of his cave on Mount Horeb, waiting for God to pass by but all he sees and hears is fierce wind, earthquake, shaking and the noise of thunder. Could all that possibly be the sound of God passing by?

Actually, what he is watching from the safety of his cave is a battle taking place, a battle between chaos and order, between noise and silence. But in the end he realizes that God cannot be found in any of these; God is not found in chaos but only in silence, in a small whispering sound.

I would like to believe that this story is a metaphor about life, about life in this world: the battle between peace and war, justice and injustice, between freedom and oppression, between pride and humility, between sin and grace. That struggle goes on all around us in the world every day and we have choices to make.

But on the personal level, I believe most of us naturally long for silence in our lives. Noise and chaos is never a choice; it is always happening all around us on any given day. I would go even further and claim that silence is a sacred quest, a holy search, a divine experience that must go on throughout our entire life. Noise and confusion is not a natural choice. Silence, on the other hand, stillness, peace, quiet, calm and hush, all these are natural to us. Perhaps it all started in the womb of our mother where silence and safety was our first experience.

In support of all this, let me then offer you two very different quotations on silence but which at the same time seem very similar.

The first is from the diary of Mother Teresa: "We need to find God", she says, "and God cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature – trees, flowers, grass grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence."

And now, a quote from the American humorist, Will Rogers. He says: "Never miss a chance to shut up." Not a bad suggestion.

Summing up all this, I think we, like Elijah, wait for God to pass by as we live in a world that often seems very chaotic. Fortunately, the chaos is limited to the articles in the morning newspaper or our favorite website. It would seem safe to say, therefore, that the silence we experience in our homes or in some personal place of choice is in the end the best environment to find our God...the God who is passing by each day.

A final word: I wonder if this is the reason why Jesus often chose to leave the noise of arguments with the scribes and Pharisees, the noise of the crowds and go up into the hills by himself where it was quiet? Perhaps he went into the hills because that would be the best place to hear God passing by in a whisper.

*Happy Birthday Patricia (8/17)*

# Prayer for Peace

God is great! God is so good! We praise you, God, and thank you for your amazing love and your vision for all humankind to live at peace with one another, with all creation, and you.

We have not always been at peace, or even kind to one another.  
Forgive us, we humbly pray, and open our minds and our hearts to see your will for our lives.  
We uphold the people of Tonga.

Help us all realize our responsibility in caring for the environment which nurtures all lands and all peoples.  
As individuals we come to you at this time with needs and concerns.  
We seek your spirit of intelligence to direct our thoughts and actions.  
Guide us as we strive to be your presence of peace in our world.

*In the name of the Jesus Christ, Amen.*

## Stewardship Thought For The Week

*Albert Schweitzer*

Do all the good you can, By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can, In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can, To all the people you can,  
As long as you ever can

*St. Ignatius of Loyola*

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours;  
no hands but yours,  
no feet but yours.*

*Yours are the eyes through which He is to go about doing good;  
yours are the hands with which He is to bless people now.*

All baptized and confirmed members of the Church must play their full part in its life and witness.  
That you may fulfill this duty we call upon you:

To follow the example of Christ in home and daily life and to bear personal witness to him

To be regular in private prayer day by day

To read the bible carefully

To come to church every Sunday

To receive the Communion faithfully and regularly

To give personal service to church, neighbors and community

To uphold the standard of marriage entrusted by Christ to his Church

To care that all children are brought up to love and serve God

To give money for the work of the Church at home and overseas.