

1st Session

My Sheep Hear My Voice

Ps 85:8

“Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his saints, to those who turn to him in their hearts.”
RSV

“I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises
peace to his people, his saints”
NIV

“I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me: for he
will speak peace unto his people: And unto his saints:
and unto them that are converted to the heart.”
DRB

Ps 85:8

“I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me...”
DRB

Principles for Hearing:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1) God is my Father | 1 Jn 2:1 |
| 2) My Father has a plan for my life | Jer 29:11 |
| 3) My Father wants to make known the plan for my life. | Is 30:21 |

Today's memory verse:

Jn 10:27

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they
follow me”

Jn 10:27

What do you think when someone says –
“God told me...”

Do you think that God wants to speak to you?

Do you think God would speak to you?

Do you hear from God?

Do you turn to God for guidance and expect to
receive guidance from Him?

Do you ask God for guidance –
Career, moving, money, time, eating, TV,
movies

Do you ask God for guidance as to how to love your
Spouse, children, friends, enemy.

Do you ask God how to
Discipline your children, perform a certain task

Do you ask God how to
Pray, break free of a sin

Do you ever pray –
God, what are you saying to me?
God, what are you asking of me?

We are to be conformed to Jesus, just as Jesus was conformed to the Father.

Ro 8:29

29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

Jesus only did what the Father was doing:

Jn 5:19-20

19* Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. 20* For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel.

Jesus only said what the Father told him what to teach:

Jn 7:16

16 So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me;

Jesus taught is we must do the will of the Father:

Mt 12:48-50

48 But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" 49 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brethren! 50* For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Mt 7:21

21* "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

The Father commanded Jesus what to say and how to say it:

Jn 12:49-50

49 For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak.
50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me."

For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.

NIV

We needed to be guided like Jesus.

Imitation of Christ

Book 3, Chapter 1

THE INWARD CONVERSATION OF CHRIST WITH THE FAITHFUL SOUL

I WILL hear what the Lord God will speak in me."

Blessed is the soul who hears the Lord speaking within her, who receives the word of consolation from His lips. Blessed are the ears that catch the accents of divine whispering, and pay no heed to the murmurings of this world. Blessed indeed are the ears that listen, not to the voice which sounds without, but to the truth which teaches within. Blessed are the eyes which are closed to exterior things and are fixed upon those which are interior. Blessed are they who penetrate inwardly, who try daily to prepare themselves more and more to understand mysteries. Blessed are they who long to give their time to God, and who cut themselves off from the hindrances of the world.

Ears hear a voice

Is 30:21

21 And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

When you hear his voice

Heb 3:7-11

7* Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, when you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their hearts; they have not known my ways.' 11 As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"

Presumed hearing

Sacrament of Confirmation:

Is 11:2-3

2* And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

Counsel To know God's will

Wisdom To know how to do God's will

God wants to speak to us.

Our children should be trained in this.

Story of monastery, Elijah, "This is not the one."

We teach doctrine, but we do little to form relationship (spirituality).

Memory Verse for today

Jn 10:27

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"

Jn 10:27

My sheep hear...

Hearing from Jesus is a sign and quality of a follower of Jesus.

God wants to speak to us!

Tool:

Lectio Divina

How do we hear from God.

God Word is what God sounds like.

Trained in hearing God's Word trains our hear to hear God's Word.

Mediate on His Word.

Jos 1:8

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.

Ps 1:1-3

1* Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)

Pope Benedict "tool of the New Evangelization"

I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of "Lectio divina": "the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart" (cf. "Dei Verbum," n. 25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church -- I am convinced of it -- a new spiritual springtime.

Sept 16th, 2006

Why – God is speaking to each soul.

Imagine a Church were God speaks to its members daily with

- 1) Encouragement
- 2) Edification
- 3) and exhortation.

Imagine your life is God spoke to you personally each day to

Encourage

Edify

And Exhort YOU!

1 Cor 14:3

But he that prophesieth, speaketh to men unto edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)

Lectio- *to read*: Look up and then write the passage down. As you read have faith that God is speaking to you personally.

Meditatio – *to meditate*: What is God saying to you? Use who, what, where, when, why.

Oratio – *to speak*: Speak to God about what He is saying to you.

Contemplatio – *to contemplate*: Read the passage again. Sit and enjoy the presence of the Lord. Let the Word you have read become a point for God to speak more clearly and personally into your life.

Example:

Use Sunday reading.

Sunday reading a great place to start letting God personally speak into your life.

See Journal.

Spiritual Exercise:

Using Lectio Divina, let the Lord speak personally to you through His Word.

Mt 4:18-22

Mk 8:34-36

Jn 1:35-42

Ps 85:8

"I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me..."

DRB

Principles for Hearing:

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| 1) God is my Father | 1 Jn 2:1 |
| 2) My Father has a plan for my life | Jer 29:11 |
| 3) My Father wants to make known the plan for my life. | Is 30:21 |

Today's memory verse:

Jn 10:27

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"

Jn 10:27

2nd Session

Ps 85:8

"I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me..."
DRB

Principles for Hearing:

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| 1) God is my Father | 1 Jn 2:1 |
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Today's memory verse:

1 Sam 3:10

"Speak, for your servant is listening."

1 Sam 3:10

Good fathers speak to their children.

Mt 7:7-11

7* "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Jesus has given us a tool for revealing what God, His Father, our Father, is like –
Look to good earthly fathers.

Good fathers speak to their children.

Using our principle of fatherhood we can conclude that God, our Eternal Father, wants to speak to us.

Psalm 32:8-9

8 I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not keep with you.

Psalm 48:14

14 that this is God, our God for ever and ever. He will be our guide for ever.

Psalm 73:24

24 Thou dost guide me with thy counsel, and afterward thou wilt receive me to glory.

Imitation of Christ

Book 3, Chapter 2

The children of Israel once said to Moses: "Speak thou to us and we will hear thee: let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die."

Not so, Lord, not so do I pray. Rather with Samuel the prophet I entreat humbly and earnestly: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Do not let Moses or any of the prophets speak to me; but You speak, O Lord God, Who inspired and enlightened all the prophets; for You alone, without them, can instruct me perfectly, whereas they, without You, can do nothing. They, indeed, utter fine words, but they cannot impart the spirit. They do indeed speak beautifully, but if You remain silent they cannot inflame the heart. They deliver the message; You lay bare the sense. They place before us mysteries, but You unlock their meaning. They proclaim commandments; You help us to keep them. They point out the way; You give strength for the journey. They work only outwardly; You instruct and enlighten our hearts. They water on the outside; You give the increase.

They cry out words; You give understanding to the hearer.

Let not Moses speak to me, therefore, but You, the Lord my God, everlasting truth, speak lest I die and prove barren if I am merely given outward advice and am not inflamed within; lest the word heard and not kept, known and not loved, believed and not obeyed, rise up in judgment against me.

Speak, therefore, Lord, for Your servant listens. "Thou hast the words of eternal life." Speak to me for the comfort of my soul and for the amendment of my life, for Your praise, Your glory, and Your everlasting honor.

Ex 33:7-11

7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; and he called it the tent of meeting. And every one who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. 8 Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose up, and every man stood at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he had gone into the tent. 9 When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the door of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. 10 And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the door of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, every man at his tent door. 11* Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

God would speak to Moses as a man speaks to his friend.

How do you feel when you hear this?

For me

Wow

Envy

I want a relationship like that.

For me the change came through
Imitation of Christ Book III – Christ and a soul
conversing.

The Book *He and I* - Christ and a soul
conversing.

The movie "*The Day the Sun Danced*"

My desert cave.

I read Ex 33:7-11 and believed it for me.

People say to me, "It's hard to hear God."
There are many reasons for this.

In the last session I am going to give you a list of "Blocks to Hearing God's Voice."

These are not blocks, but two of the reasons we do not hear from God are

- 1) He usually speaks in a still small voice.
- 2) His voice sounds familiar.

We want him to sound like the voice of God from the Burning Bush scene in "The Ten Commandments". Tell the story of Pete Summers and Cecil B. DeMille. Though God can make himself sound this way, he usually speaks in a familiar voice.

Still Small Voice - See 1 Kings 19:9-13

9 And there he came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10* He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." 11 And he said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. 13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Familiar Voice – See 1 Sam 3:1-16

1 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place; 3 the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down within the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" * and he said, "Here I am!" 5 and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. 6 And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, Speak, LORD, for thy servant hears." So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 And the LORD came and stood forth, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for thy servant hears." 11 Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel, at which the two ears of every one that hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfil against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I tell him that I am about to punish his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, * and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering for ever." 15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am."

Notice that Samuel thought that God's voice was Eli.

God spoke to Samuel with the sound of a familiar voice.

Today's memory verse

1 Sam 3:10

"Speak, for your servant is listening."

1 Sam 3:10

H.O.W.S.

I want to give you the **HOWS** of how God speaks to us. Pay attention to these.

Hear

Others

World

Sacred Revelation

Heart – God will give promptings to the heart as to his will. We need to pay attention to what is going on inside of us.

Others – God has given us the gift of others to help us hear his voice. Others will be pointing things out to us. This is the importance of

- 1) those of authority in our lives
 - a. spouse
 - b. parents
 - c. priest
 - d. teachers
- 2) Spiritual directors

3) Prayer community

- a. Where you know others and they know you.

World – God will speak to use through our circumstances.

Sacred Revelation (Usually called *Divine Revelation*)

1. Scripture
2. Tradition
3. Magisterium

Don't just go with one. Ask for a confirmation.

2 Cor 13:1

Behold, this is the third time I am coming to you: In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word stand.

DRB

This confirmation should come

Hear

Others

World

Sacred Revelation

Promptings of the Holy Spirit

“There will be a new springtime for the Church if people will welcome the promptings of the Holy Spirit.”

Pope John Paul II

More we respond, the more they will come.

Lk 16:10

10* "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much...

Obedience

Mt 7:21

21* "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Jn 14:15

15* "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Jas 1:22

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

The more we obey, the more the promptings will come because God knows He can trust us with His will.

Tool: Journaling

Journal is not a diary. A journal is to record your dialogue with the Lord and not to record events.

Why is journaling important:

Mother Nadine Brown of the Intercessors of the Lamb

* Journaling focuses us so that we do not wander from the Lord during our prayed listening time.

* Journaling focuses us so that we can find the thread of what God is trying to say to us.

* Journaling helps us get a recall of what has happened during our prayer time.

* Journaling helps us to get in touch with our feelings and learn to recognize the movements of the heart, consolation and desolation.

* In times of aridity and desolation, we have a tendency to think that God never speaks to us but when we reread our journal, we see that, yes, the Lord has been speaking to us, even in these times of dryness.

* Journaling helps us to avoid just thinking about ourselves which will go nowhere. It doesn't mean that we can't think about ourselves and get our feelings out, but we take our feelings to God. This is healthy introspection that leads to dialogue with God. It helps us deal with the truth of the emotions that are there.

How to Journal

I recommend that you buy a journal that will be sacred to you.

Do not write in the first 6 pages as this will be your index. I will talk more about this. Number your pages, beginning on page 7 of your journal. This will be page #1 for your journaling.

Set a time and place where you will not be interrupted. Consecrate this time to God. After communion and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is an excellent time to hear from the Lord.

Enter into a time of prayer. Increase your faith by remembering the

Principles for Hearing:

- 1) God is my Father 1 Jn 2:1
- 2) My Father has a plan for my life Jer 29:11
- 3) My Father wants to make known Is 30:21
the plan for my life.

Then say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

If you have the gift of tongues, use this gift before you begin to write.

At this point you can use Lectio Divina or "The 6 Keys to Hearing God Speak" that I will give you in the next session.

Write down what comes to you. It does not need to be in full sentence.

Let your thoughts and feelings flow.

Do not judge your thoughts or feelings, just write them down.

The freer you are with your self expression, the freer you will be in being able to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

2 Cor 3:17

17* Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Jn 7:38

38* He who believes in me, as * the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'

In these passages there are two words associated with the presence and work of the Holy Spirit:

Freedom

Flow

When we open our hearts to the voice of God through journaling, the Holy Spirit will come when we are free and let him flow.

Do not only tune your heart to words, let the Holy Spirit also bring you images, pictures.

Even if something does not make sense to you, at the time, write it down s it might be a piece of the puzzle that will fit in a day, a week, or a month.

Indexing - Looking for the thread.

Tapestry from the back

Is 28:9-10

9 "Whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast? 10 For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."

The Lord, many times, reveals in part, "Here a little, there a little – precept on precept, line upon line."

Journaling helps us to build line upon line.

We need to be weaned from milk and mature.

Hearing God and being lead by God is a sign of maturity:

Ro 8:14

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Remember, I said to leave the first 6 pages of your journal blank?

When your time of listening and journaling, go to your Index and summarize your thoughts in a few words and then write down the pages you will find these revelations on.

Reviewing your Journal:

Look for the thread.

Here a little, there a little.

Precept on precept.

Line upon line is how the Lord speaks.

Daily - review your journal before you go to sleep.

Weekly - Review your index once a week.

After reviewing write any thoughts that come to you. This is a good Sabbath observance.

Monthly – Review your Index monthly. First Firday is a good time for this.

Do you see any common thread?

A good time to share your journal is with your spouse, your spiritual director and/or your prayer group.

Spiritual Exercise:

1) Letter writing

Review the H.O.W.S. and ask the Holy Spirit to show you in which one of these does he want to speak to you.

Write a Letter to God, the Father, based on which on the H.O.W.S. he is using to speak to you.

Start your Letter likes this,
"Heavenly Father,
End with your name.

Now, let the Father speak to you:

Start your Letter with

"Dear your name,"

Be free and let the Holy Spirit brings the words of the Father to you.

End it with,

"Love, your Father in heaven."

2) Lectio Divina:

Ps 139

Is 49:14-16

Ro 5:8

3) What do you want, Lord?

As you go through your day, stop and ask God, "What do you want, Lord?" This will help you to be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Ps 85:8

"I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me..."

DRB

Principles for Hearing:

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| 3) My Father wants to make known the plan for my life. | Is 30:21 |

Today's memory verse:

1 Sam 3:10

"Speak, for your servant is listening."

1 Sam 3:10

3rd Session

Ps 85:8

"I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me..."
DRB

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Today's memory verse:

Jn 2:5
"Do whatever he tells you."
Jn 2:5

Imitation of Christ Book 3, Chapter 3

I taught the prophets from the beginning, and even to this day I continue to speak to all men. But many are hardened. Many are deaf to My voice. Most men listen more willingly to the world than to God. They are more ready to follow the appetite of their flesh than the good pleasure of God. The world, which promises small and passing things, is served with great eagerness: I promise great and eternal things and the hearts of men grow dull. Who is there that serves and obeys Me in all things with as great care as that with which the world and its masters are served?

God wants to speak to us -
Thy will be done

Mt 6:10

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as
it is in heaven.

We need a desire to do God's will.

Eph 5:10

10 and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Eph 5:17

17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what
the will of the Lord is.

Wherefore become not unwise, but understanding
what is the will of God.

DRB

Ps 143:10

10 Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God! Let
thy good spirit lead me on a level path!

Level path – not up and down.

Gal 5:25

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the
Spirit.

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with
the Spirit.

NIV

Holy Spirit, Guide to all truth

Jn 16:13

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you
into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own
authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and
he will declare to you the things that are to come.

As we seek to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit we must not trust in our own understanding:

Pro 3:5-8

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7* Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your flesh* and refreshment* to your bones.

Today's memory verse:

Jn 2:5

"Do whatever he tells you."

Jn 2:5

Discernment of Spirits

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we are to eagerly desire, to covet.

1 Cor 12:10

10* to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits,

To another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the discerning of spirits...
DRB

Test the spirits

1 Thes 5:19-22

19* Do not quench the Spirit, 20* do not despise prophesying, 21* but test everything; hold fast what is good, 22 abstain from every form of evil.

What are the spirits to test:

1. Human spirit
2. Evil spirit
3. Divine spirit

Our first stance is that of faith in the Principles for Hearing:

- 1) God is my Father 1 Jn 2:1
- 2) My Father has a plan for my life Jer 29:11
- 3) My Father wants to make known Is 30:21
the plan for my life.

God is going to give us good things (Mt 7:7-11).

Do not let fear capture your heart.

Difference between caution and fear.

Many fear when they approaching hearing the voice of God.

Remember:

Jn 10:27

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”

Is 30:21

21 And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

In Confirmation you have been given

Counsel

To know God's will

Wisdom

To know how to do God's will

There are three principles of Discernment:

1. Peace
2. God does not contradict himself
3. Seek wise counsel

First principle of discernment:

Do you have peace?

Peace is the gift that Jesus' last desire to leave with the disciples:

Jn 14:27

27* Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Peace is the first gift of the resurrection

Jn 20:19

19* On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

Is 26:3

3 Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee.

If we are stayed on God, locked on his will, determining in our hearts, "I will hear what the Lord has to say, a voice that speaks of peace" (Ps 85:8), we will be kept in peace.

Peace is the confirmation of the Holy Spirit that we are in the will of the Father.

First principle of discernment:

Do you have peace?

Second principle of Discernment:

God does not contradict himself as he is not the author of confusion –

1 Cor 14:33

33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

God will not contradict

1. Scripture
2. Tradition
3. Magisterium

Third principle of Discernment:

Seek Wise Counsel

Sir 6:2

2 Do not exalt yourself through your soul's counsel, lest your soul be torn in pieces like a bull.

Pro 12:15

15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

Pro 15:20

22 Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed.

Pro 19:20

20 Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom for the future.

Pro 13:20

20 He who walks with wise men becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Sir 32:19

19 Do nothing without deliberation (counsel); and when you have acted, do not regret it.

Where do we find wise counsel?

Spouse

Those in authority over us:

Priest

Parents

Teachers

Spiritual Director

CCC #2690

The Holy Spirit gives to certain of the faithful the gifts of wisdom, faith and discernment for the sake of this common good which is prayer (*spiritual direction*). Men and women so endowed are true servants of the living tradition of prayer.

According to St. John of the Cross, the person wishing to advance toward perfection should "take care into whose hands he entrusts himself, for as the master is, so will the disciple be, and as the father is so will be the son." And further: "In addition to being learned and discreet a director should be experienced. . . . If the spiritual director has no experience of the spiritual life, he will be incapable of leading into it the souls whom God is calling to it, and he will not even understand them."

Introduction to the Devout Life

St Francis DeSales

CHAPTER IV.

The Need of a Guide for those who would enter upon and advance in the Devout Life.

WHEN Tobias was bidden to go to Rages, he was willing to obey his father, but he objected that he knew not the way;--to which Tobit answered, "Seek thee a man which may go with thee:" (Tob 5:3)and even so, daughter, I say to you, If you would really tread the paths of the devout life, seek some holy man to guide and conduct you. This is the precept of precepts, says the devout Avila,--seek as you will you can never so surely discover God's Will as through the channel of humble obedience so universally taught and practised by all the Saints of olden time. When the blessed Teresa read of the great penances

performed by Catherine of Cordova, she desired exceedingly to imitate them, contrary to the mind of her Confessor, who forbade her to do the like, and she was tempted to disobey him therein. Then God spoke to Teresa, saying, "My child, thou art on a good and safe road:-- true, thou seest all this penance, but verily I esteem thy obedience as a yet greater virtue:" --and thenceforth S. Teresa so greatly loved the virtue of obedience, that in addition to that due to her superiors, she took a vow of special obedience to a pious ecclesiastic, pledging herself to follow his direction and guidance, which proved an inexpressible help to her. And even so before and after her many pious souls have subjected their will to God's ministers in order the better to submit themselves to Him, a practice much commended by S. Catherine of Sienna in her Dialogues. The devout Princess S. Elisabeth gave an unlimited obedience to the venerable Conrad; and one of the parting counsels given by S. Louis to his son ere he died was, "Confess thyself often,-- choose a single-minded, worthy confessor, who is able wisely to teach thee how to do that which is needful for thee." "A faithful friend," we are told in Holy Scripture, "is a strong defence, and he that hath found such an one hath found a treasure;" (Ecclus 6:14) and again: "A faithful friend is the medicine of life; and they that fear the Lord shall find him." (Ecclus 5:16) These sacred words have chiefly reference, as you see, to the immortal life, with a view to which we specially need a faithful friend, who will guide us by his counsel and advice, thereby guarding us against the deceits and snares of the Evil One:--he will be as a storehouse of wisdom to us in our sorrows, trials and falls; he will be as a healing balm to stay and soothe our heart in the time of spiritual sickness,--he will shield us from evil, and confirm that which is good in us, and when we fall through infirmity, he will avert the deadly nature of the evil, and raise us up again.

But who can find such a friend? The Wise Man answers:--"He that feareth the Lord:"(Ecclus 6:17) that is to say, the truly humble soul which earnestly desires to advance in the spiritual life. So, daughter, inasmuch as it concerns you so closely to set forth on this devout journey under good guidance, do you pray most earnestly to God to supply you with a guide after His Own Heart, and never doubt but that He will grant you one who is wise and faithful, even should He send you an angel from Heaven, as He sent to Tobias.

In truth, your spiritual guide should always be as a heaven-sent angel to you;--by which I mean that when you have found him, you are not to look upon him, or trust in him or his wisdom as an ordinary man; but you must look to God, Who will help you and speak to you through this man, putting into his heart and mouth that which is needful to you; so that you ought to hearken as though he were an angel come down from

Heaven to lead you thither. Deal with him in all sincerity and faithfulness, and with open heart; manifesting alike your good and your evil, without pretence or dissimulation. Thus your good will be examined and confirmed, and your evil corrected and remedied; --you will be soothed and strengthened in trouble, moderated and regulated in prosperity. Give your guide a hearty confidence mingled with sacred reverence, so that reverence in no way shall hinder your confidence, and confidence nowise lessen your reverence: trust him with the respect of a daughter for her father; respect him with the confidence of a son in his mother. In a word, such a friendship should be strong and sweet; altogether holy, sacred, divine and spiritual. And with such an aim, choose one among a thousand, Avila says;--and I say among ten thousand, for there are fewer than one would think capable of this office. He must needs be full of love, of wisdom and of discretion; for if either of these three be wanting there is danger. But once more I say, ask such help of God, and when you have found it, bless His Holy Name; be stedfast, seek no more, but go on simply, humbly and trustfully, for you are safe to make a prosperous journey.

Find wise counsel in Prayer Groups

CCC #2689

Prayer groups, indeed "schools of prayer," are today one of the signs and one of the driving forces of renewal of prayer in the Church, provided they drink from authentic wellsprings of Christian prayer. Concern for ecclesial communion is a sign of true prayer in the Church.

Today's memory verse:

Jn 2:5

"Do whatever he tells you."

Jn 2:5

Tool:

4 Keys to Hearing the Voice of God

Hab 2:1-4

1* I will take my stand to watch, and station myself on the tower, and look forth to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint. 2 And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain upon tablets, so he may run who reads it. 3* For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end--it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. 4* Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail, * but the righteous shall live by his faith.

1 Be Still – (Ps 42:10) Prepare your heart to be ready to receive a word from the Lord knowing that he wants to speak to you.

2 Fix your Eyes on Jesus (Heb 12:2) – We are not looking to our thoughts. We are looking to Jesus to hear what he will say and see what he will show us. Be aware of both word and images that come to you.

3 Surrender to the Flow of the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:38-39) - Allow the Holy Spirit to begin to fill you inmost being with words and images. Do not judge them at this point.

4 Write (Hab 2:1-3) in your journal all that the Holy Spirit is bringing to you.

Ps 85:8

"I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me..."

DRB

Principles for Hearing:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1) God is my Father | 1 Jn 2:1 |
| 2) My Father has a plan for my life | Jer 29:11 |
| 3) My Father wants to make known the plan for my life. | Is 30:21 |

Today's memory verse:

Jn 2:5

"Do whatever he tells you."

Jn 2:5

Spiritual Exercise:

1) What do you want, Lord?

As you go through your day, stop and ask God, "What do you want, Lord?" This will help you to be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

2) Journal using "4 Keys to hearing God's

Voice." Find someone that you know will be open to the work the Holy Spirit is doing in you to hear God's voice and share this journaling experience with them.

3) Lectio Divina

Rm 8:28

Is 43:1-7

Ps 91

4th Session

Ps 85:8

"I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me..."

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Today's memory verse:

Lk 8:18

18* Take heed then how you hear...

Lk 8:18

Therefore consider carefully how you listen.
NIV

God wants to speak to us.

He has given us the gifts of counsel and wisdom:

Counsel

To know God's will

Wisdom

To know how to do God's will

God wants to speak to us to
Encourage
Edify
And Exhort!

We have learned Lectio Divina
Lectio – To Read
Meditatio – To meditate upon
Oratio – To speak
Contemplatio – To contemplate and allow God to
speak to us.

God is a Father so he speaks to his children.
God usually speaks in a still small voice that is
familiar. We saw this with Elijah and Samuel.

We learned the H.O.W.S. of how God speaks:
Hear
Others
World
Sacred Revelation

We learned that the more we surrender to the
promptings of the Holy Spirit the more they will come.

We learned how to journal because many times God
speaks here a little, there a little, percept upon
precept and line upon line. In journaling we need to
look for the common thread. Indexing helps us to find
the common thread.

Ps 85:8

“I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me: for he will speak peace unto his people: And unto his saints: and unto them that are converted to the heart.” DRB

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We need discernment of spirits.

There are three spirits that we need to test:

4. Human spirit
5. Evil spirit
6. Divine spirit

We should use caution, not fear.

There are three principles of Discernment:

4. Peace
5. God does not contradict himself
6. Seek wise counsel

We learend 4 Keys for Hearing God's voice based on Hab 2:1-4:

1 Be Still – (Ps 42:10) Prepare your heart to be ready to receive a word from the Lord knowing that he wants to speak to you.

2 Fix your Eyes on Jesus (Heb 12:2) – We are not looking to our thoughts. We are looking to Jesus to hear what he will say and see what he will show us. Be aware of both word and images that come to you.

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TODAY'S LESSON

God Has A Plan for Your Life

Jer 29:11

11 For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

God has a plan for your life. Plans for your welfare. Plans for peace. We can trust this plan, but we need to know what it is so we can fulfill it.

God wants to speak His plan to us in every situation:
How we handle relationships.
How we handle conflict.
How we spend our time.
How we spend our money.
Where we live.
Who we marry.
How we forgive.
How we pray.

The Lord say, "I know the plans I have for you..."

Blocks to Hearing the Voice of God

- * Lack of faith that God would speak to you.
- * Lack of formation as to how to hear from God.
- * Lack of experience.
- * Not taking the time to hear from God.
- * Fear of what God might say.
- * Not acting on a previous word from God.
- * Sin on your soul.
- * Not asking for the grace to hear His voice.
- * Devotional busyness.
- * The enemy.

What if you don't hear?

- 1) Try to discover God's will Eph 5:10
- 2) Seek Counsel Pro 12:15
- 3) Walk by faith 2 Cor 5:7

Story of college decision

"Bigger than the biggest mistake"

"make the decision and ask for a blessing"

Ro 8:28

28 We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.

Don't give up.

Hearing takes faith and faith is built by practice.

Ps 85:8

"I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me..."

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Tool:

The Gift of Prophecy

Prophecy is the gift whereby the Holy Spirit manifest his presence by speaking in first person through a believer to another believer or to the Church.

Prophecy sounds like this –

“Thus saith the Lord, my people...”

“My people, I would say to you...”

“For the Lord would say...”

“Hear me, for I am the Lord, and I say...”

1 Cor 11:7-11

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10* to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Share story of women on airplane (*word of knowledge and prophecy*)

This gift is given to

Encourage,

Edify,

and Exhort

1 Cor 14:3

But he that prophesieth, speaketh to men unto edification, and exhortation, and comfort. DRB

1 Cor 14:24-25

24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

Prophecy manifest and makes known the presence, the reality and the personal notice of God.

We should eagerly desire, covet the gift of prophecy

1 Cor 14:1

1 Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

Num 11:29

29 But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!"

We should not despise prophecy

19* Do not quench the Spirit, 20* do not despise prophesying,

Non-prophecy

Pious thoughts coming out of a good heart.
Comes out of the human desire.

False prophecy

Pulls away from god and points to a false god.
Psychic are false prophets.

Can come as words or images.

Word of knowledge

Knowing something you could not humanly know about a person or situation.

Many times the gift of prophecy is coupled with word of knowledge.

Guidelines for Prophecy and Word of Knowledge:

1) Avoid dogmatism by saying, "The Lord told me..."

"It seems

"I believe the Lord is saying or revealing..."

"I sense

2) It is good to have someone record the prophecy either in written form or as an audio file. This record can be used for two things:

* Discern the authenticity of the prophecy.

* To build the persons faith as they wait on the fulfillment.

3) If you sense that you have a word of knowledge or a prophecy speak it out and let the church discern it.

4) Use the gift of tongues before you enter into this ministry as God will reveal things through interpretation of tongues.

Practicing Word of Knowledge and Prophecy:

Model #1

- 1) Break into pairs
- 2) One person will be the receiver and the other the minister.
- 3) The minister lay hands on the shoulder of the person being ministered to or holds their hands.
- 4) Receiver ask the Lord in their heart what the Lord would like to do for them.
- 5) In their heart the minister ask "What area of this person's life do you want to edify, exhort, or encourage, Lord?"

Example: marriage, work, ministry, etc.

- 6) Minister quietly prays in their heart for what the Lord is revealing to them about the person being ministered to.
- 7) After a period of time, the minister asks, "Lord, is there anything else that you would like to reveal to me and have me pray for this person.
- 8) Minister shares his experience: what was revealed and how he prayed. Receiver shares their experience.
- 9) Reverse.

Ground rules for ministry time:

- 1) lay hands softly on shoulder of the person receiving ministry or hold hands.
- 2) No prophesying or words of knowledge about death or pregnancy or words of judgment.

You are not to share this experience out side of here and use the person's name.

Model #2

1) We are going to break groups of four.
Preferably you should find people you do not know.

1st person is receiver

2nd is minister

3rd and 4th are prayer support with the

3rd person as recorder writing all down.

2) 2nd person, the person doing the ministry prays - "What area of this person's life do you want to edify, exhort, or encourage, Lord?"

Example: marriage, work, ministry, etc.

Person doing ministry speaks this out.

Recorder writes this down.

3) Person doing ministry spends some time in silence asking God what he wants to say or reveal to this person about this area of their life.

Person doing ministry allows the Holy Spirit to bring images and any words to be spoken out.

Recorder writes this down anything spoken.

4) Person doing ministry ask person if this is connecting with the receiver's life.

5) Person doing ministry prays for person based on what was revealed.

6) These steps are repeated with other members.

