

HEARING GOD, PART 1



Pray to hear God speak?

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. (Mt.13:16)

Last time I described the importance of praising God in our prayer. Praising Him takes us outside of ourselves and literally grants us an audience with our Divine King, *“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.”* (Psalm 100:4). So, what do we do when we are in his courts? If we look at the Mass as a model of prayer, it is very clear. After the opening of the Mass, we sit and listen to “God’s Word” in the scriptures. Therefore, our time of prayer should likewise include time to *hear* what God has to say!

I have often been amused by the fact that, while most people believe praying is a good and wholesome thing; if you say, “I actually *hear* God when I pray,” people think you are crazy! But Scripture tells us that indeed, God does want to speak to us. Luke 12:12 assures us that we will be taught by God Himself through the Holy Spirit, *“for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say.”* John 14:21 promises that God will surely reveal Himself to us, *“They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”* In Amos 3:7 we are told, *“God does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.”*

Now you may be tempted to object saying, “I am no prophet.” But I would object saying that any baptized person is a prophet. In our baptismal ritual, at the anointing with the Sacred Chrism, the person is anointed “priest, **prophet** and king.” I dare say that we are card carrying prophets by baptism. It is sad to say that we may not be aware of, nor using this God given gift. But do not despair; in prayer we can use this wonderful gift.

This marvelous gift becomes apparent to us as we desire to hear God and come to know Him. As we come to know God, we will recognize that he has some marvelous ways of speaking to us. Knowing God in prayer sensitizes us to the many ways God can communicate. True, he most obviously communicates to us through Sacred Scripture and our Church Teaching. Yet, when one begins to pray, we realize that God is not limited to the constraints of language, but in other ways, He can give us little personal messages throughout the day.

I remember, as a child that our family would have guests for dinner. If any of us kids were not well behaved at the dinner table, we got **that look** from mom or dad. No words were spoken nor were they necessary because, based on past interaction with mom and dad, we knew very well what **that look** meant. Indeed, I am amazed by the way Mothers can interpret the meaning of their babies crying. Having been attentive to their new born babies, they quickly learn that crying in a particular tone means “feed me.” But in another tone it means “hold me.” But if mom does not take the time to actually practice listening, this unique understanding does not occur. I am more amazed that people can actually *hear* their pets! I have even seen people carry on a conversation with dogs and cats! Of course, anyone who has had a long standing relationship with their dog can understand this. So, why would it be so strange to presume that might understand our pets more than we understand our God?

While there have been thousands of books written on the subject of prayer there are some basic principles will spark your prayer life. Much of my material will be rooted in a wonderful book that is no longer published, Appointment With God, Fr. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R (Franciscan University Press). It is one of the best books I have seen for outlining and forming a life of prayer. If you can find a copy via the internet it will make a great resource for your spiritual life of prayer.