

“If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Ps 95:8). In a world full of noise and distraction, it is hard to hear the voice of the LORD. And when we do hear it, there are times when we harden our hearts because we have grown accustomed to the noise and the distractions of this world.

To hear the LORD, we need a place of quiet, a desert without distractions. But first one must still the heart. The Israelites are in a barren region, the wilderness. They are in a holy place, a sacred place, and still their inclination is to complain. “Why have you brought the LORD’s assembly into this wilderness for us and our livestock to die here?” (Nm 20:4).

When people complained that they had no food, the Lord sent them manna from heaven. Now they complain they have no water. Moses and Aaron themselves have lost confidence in God. God has the power to deliver them from every trouble and with some hesitancy they bring the needs of the people before God. Moses strikes the rock twice and water gushes forth in abundance. As we here in psalm 95, “cry out to the rock of our salvation” (Ps 95:1).

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“During a normal summer, Glacier Bay and the surrounding area buzzes with traffic, as vessels of all sizes, from massive, 150,000-tonne cruise liners to smaller whale-watching boats, ply the waters as part of Southern Alaska's massive tourism industry.”<sup>i</sup> With the Covid-19 pandemic a year ago and the cessation of cruise ship traffic, Alaskan waters became a quiet place, quieter than they had been in 100 years.

Humpback whales took notice. Instead of talking louder, staying closer together and simplifying their conversations, these great creatures of the sea took advantage of their newfound silence. Pre-pandemic distances of 200 meters stretched out to 2.3 kilometers as mother whales felt safe to leave their calves so that they might swim out farther and collect food.

As the whales seemed more serene and joyful people noticed as well. “The giant pause ... of the pandemic really gave an opportunity for people to rethink what we have and what we need and want.”<sup>ii</sup> But other people grumbled, they feared the silence, they worried over loss of tourism, they pleaded with politicians to bring the cruise ships back. The quiet of last summer has given way to the hustle and bustle of more ships ... the silence is gone ... the noise and distraction of the world have returned.

In a world full of noise and distraction it is hard to hear the voice of the Lord. We need stillness and quiet to hear the faint voice of God who comes to us in the shadow of silence. We must quiet our inner voice in our own head that worries about all the things we want to accomplish. We must turn down the volume of our own thoughts as we wait in silence for the Lord. Prayerfully, we become still. We can center ourselves with a simple word like Jesus, Love, or Mercy.<sup>iii</sup> If we catch our minds drifting back into noisy waters, we must gently move back to the stillness.

Some find that stillness in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Others contemplate the beauty of nature. Others through contemplation of Sacred Scripture. Jesus withdrew to the mountains at night in silent prayer. In the stillness and waiting, there is an emptying of self a movement from self-centeredness to God. Not my will, but your will be done (Lk 22:42). We should not be surprised if the LORD asks us to pick up our cross and follow him. When Jesus spoke to his disciples of suffering greatly, of sacrifice, death, and resurrection, they

turned to the noise of the world. “God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you” (Mt 16:22).

We must quiet the inner voice in our own head that worries like Peter and turn back to Jesus. Perish our thoughts and desires if they are not purely from God, for God, and in God.<sup>iv</sup> “If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Ps 95:8).

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<sup>i</sup> [bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-58032702](http://bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-58032702)

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> Billy, Dennis. Finding Our Way to God. Pgs 27-29.

<sup>iv</sup> Eymard, Peter Julian, Meditation on the Lord’s Prayer found at [acfp2000.com/Trinity.html](http://acfp2000.com/Trinity.html)