



March 2015
Volume 88 Number 3

From the Clergy Associate for Family Ministries

March Message

It's Lent. In reflecting this past Sunday (February 15) on Mark's version of the Transfiguration story, I spoke about the message from God—to Peter, James, and John, as well as to all of us—that we listen to Jesus. "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Simple enough.

Listening is one of the most generous acts of love we can offer one another. The word LISTEN may be one of the most important words in scripture, not to mention life... So if we love God first and foremost, we should be in the habit, first and foremost, of listening to God!

But we find ways to shut out the word we need most. We fill our heads with buzz. We put on noise-canceling headphones, literally or figuratively, and in so doing we may actually block out the very thing we need to hear. Thomas Merton wrote: "If you've never had any distractions, you don't know how to pray. For the secret of prayer is hunger for God, a hunger that lies far deeper than the level of language or affection."¹

This Lent I'm seeking ways to unplug my ears to Jesus in the midst of many distractions. Spending more time closing my mouth and opening my ears. Spending more time making myself open to God's presence and grace wherever I find myself.

In our Moms Group gatherings we will be listening to a variety of voices speaking, directly or indirectly, about listening and openness to God's presence and voice in our lives.

One is Anne Lamott who talks about how encounters with God happen in the most unexpected of places:

<https://m.facebook.com/AnneLamott/posts/558776657585315>

Another is Brené Brown speaking on the "Courage to be Vulnerable" with Krista Tippett in On Being on January 29, 2015:

<http://www.onbeing.org/program/brene-brown-on-vulnerability/4928/audio?embed=1>

Another, Mary Oliver reading her poem, "The Wild Geese":

¹ Page 87, The Pocket Thomas Merton

<http://onbeing.org/blog/mary-oliver-reads-wild-geese/5966>

Another, Omid Safi on “The Disease of Being Busy”:

<http://onbeing.org/blog/the-disease-of-being-busy/7023>

Another, Anastasia Hacopian, speaking about encountering God through art and children’s literature:

<http://onbeing.org/blog/to-live-as-if-i-believed-the-thin-spaces-of-childrens-literature/7281#.VOOhcHk5BMs>

We welcome your suggestions for other listening opportunities. And we welcome your presence in our conversations, if you are able. Please be in touch.

Faithfully,
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