

How to Hear God's Voice

Deacon Tim Sullivan

Two weeks ago we emphasized the importance of listening when we pray. Then last week we focused on Saint Joseph and how God sent an angel to tell Saint Joseph what to do about Mary's pregnancy. Saint Joseph listened and obeyed.

So how about us? If God is communicating to us all the time, which He is doing, how do we discern what is coming from God and what isn't?

In the Acts of the Apostles in the Bible, there are frequent references to the Holy Spirit telling the original disciples, individually and as a group, what they were supposed to do. Yet the Bible isn't clear on exactly how these messages were communicated. Did they hear an actual voice? Was it an internal prompting?

There's no objective, foolproof formula for knowing what God is communicating to us. Here's a quick guide to how it works.

Try to be conscious of all the "inputs" in your life. By "inputs" I mean the random, spontaneous thoughts that come to your mind, the things people say to you, events that take place, what you read and watch, and even your dreams. Especially important are what comes to you when you are quiet and still during your prayer time.

As all these inputs are happening, be constantly thinking, "Is that You?" Is it God that is prompting these events, these thoughts? Maybe you get a strong intuitive feeling that God is in fact communicating to you in a specific way. Or maybe you begin to see a pattern, as certain thoughts and events seem to be connected, generating some momentum.

Make sure your children learn that God has a specific will for their lives which He reveals to them as time goes by. Here's a short prayer we can all say:

"Lord, I am Your servant. Help me to know Your will, to will what You will, as You will it, because You will it."