

Our readings this weekend speak to us about how we are to *listen to God* and to be *aware of God's presence*. Well, this was never more apparent to me than this past Friday at the installation of Bishop Knestout.

The words he spoke at Vespers and at his installation speak of a man who has learned quite readily to *discern* the voice of God. He spoke of foremost of humility, which is the once facet that clearly leads us to know fully that Christ is speaking to us.

Prior to the Vespers service on Thursday evening, surrounded by Bishops, Cardinals and other dignitaries, *our* bishop came up to me and whispered, "Thank you so very much for all that Cathedral has done for this. I am so very thankful."

He also made sure he extended that in his closing remarks after his installation. I could never be *so proud as I was* with our Cathedral volunteers, my wonderful staff and our awesome choir. In particular, to Kim Kremer, who picked up a great number of steps for her fitbit watch as she oversaw one thing after another. Thank you Kim!

For those of you who could not be there, I had a rather promising role to start the liturgy. The bishop was to stand outside the doors and knock, and I, as rector, were to open the doors for him to enter. Well, the doors were rather water logged because my first push failed to open the door and I thought, "My God, have they locked the doors?"

Well, thankfully my second push forced them to open and I greeted the Bishop and welcomed him as our pastor. I should mention that something rather humorous occurred at the rehearsal for this.

As the bishop was being instructed to knock, I interrupted and said, "Wait a minute Bishop, here are your keys to the Cathedral", as if to imply, "No need to knock, you have the keys to open every door at the Cathedral, including my rectory!"

I must say when he knocked, I jumped a bit. Well God was knocking on young Samuel's door and eventually he would know to say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening!" In the gospel, we hear: "What are you looking for?" "Where do you live?" "Come and see."

What we understand from both of these readings is how important it is to learn how to listen. To listen and then understand, in the silence of the night, as did Samuel, and then listen and act, as did the Apostles in the gospel.

*An African proverb goes, "If God has given us two ears and only one tongue, it is to listen twice before speaking once."

To listen is not easy in this busy world of ours. Have you ever paused and looked about? People driving around, angerly passing other cars. People talking on the phone, others walking around oblivious as they return one text message after another. Sadly, I believe this also takes place during Mass.

How can one ever hear the voice of God amidst all of that? To all of them, as also to all of us, does not Christ put the *same question*: "What are you looking for?" Try to slow down in your busy lives and answer that question. *What the heck am I looking for in my crazy life?*

If we truly want to answer this, we should create silence and let the inner voice that inhabits us ascend *within* us. Beneath the battering of our heart dwells the Word of God that hopes to *inspire* us against the chaos that overflow outside our selves.

We must learn to tune our ears to *hear* God's voice. It's like the child who was told by his father during a symphony orchestra concert, "Listen for the flutes in this song. Don't they sound beautiful?" The child, unable to distinguish the flutes, looks up at his father with a puzzled look, "What flutes, father?"

The child first needs to learn what flutes sound like on their own, separate from the whole orchestra, before he is able to hear them in a symphony. So, it is with us as children of God. Unless we take the time to hear His voice in the quiet moments of life, we will not be able to hear him in the symphony sounds of life.

The more we are able to separate the noise of this world, the clearer we will begin to discern God's voice and say as Samuel, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." When we listen, it is then that we begin to trust that voice.

It's kinda like your GPS system. One man writes about a time in which he and his wife went to tour some of the states out west. They had never owned a GPS system, but the wife told him it was time to do so for this trip. Well, he wasn't too trustful of what was then, new technology.

The computer lady voice says, "Turn left," you turn left. She says, "Turn left," and in your heart, you think, *But I want to turn right*. So at one point when he was driving in this car, he was quite sure the lady was wrong. She said to go left, and he didn't go left. He went right, because he knew she was wrong. Then came, "Recalculating route. When safe to do so, make U-turn."

He just knew she was wrong, so he unplugged her. Then he proceeded to get very lost. His wife was now shaking her head in disbelief. So, he plugged that lady *back in*, and you know what she said? "I told you so, you little idiot."

She said, "You think I'm going to help you now? You rejected me. You just find your way home by yourself." No—she didn't say that. She said, "Recalculating route. When safe to do so, make a U-turn."

Now see, that's grace. As soon as we are ready to listen, as soon as we are ready to surrender, God will say, "Here is the way home. Make a U-turn." That's repentance. "I'll bring you home." That is grace. That's Jesus.

He is the only one with authoritative wisdom about how to live if we are willing to listen. "What are you looking for?"

It is a fundamental question for every person in every age, as a great number of voices vie for our attention. The consumerist society identifies me as a consumer, politicians as a voter, and so forth.

All of these, alone are shallow and passing, but together they can be a great distraction from the real question: *to what or to whom do I give my life?*

Like Andrew and his companion, I need a quiet hour, a quiet evening, in which the Lord can ask me, "What are you looking for?"