

Bishop's Reflection – Baptism of Jesus

“Everyone who thirsts,” everyone who hungers, everyone who seeks, everyone who labours, to each and everyone of these, God says “Listen carefully,” “Incline your ear,” “Listen, so that you may live.” “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth... So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty.”

Sometimes the Word of God comes as an earth-shattering event, as in today's Gospel, when God tears open the heavens and the Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove, “And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’” At other times His Word is more gentle, less obvious, like the dew or the mist, or the gentle rain.

But do we take time to listen, or are we so busy with our complaining, our belly-aching, that we have no time for some quiet time with God's Word, or we get frustrated at the first sign of difficulty.

“Come to the waters,” Isaiah continues, “Come, buy and eat!” “Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “Why do you spend all this time with what cannot satisfy?” Why do you exhaust yourself, and waste your time, for nothing? “Listen carefully,” “Incline your ear,” “Listen, so that you may live.”

I am not one who easily gives myself to new year's resolutions. So often they come and go. But, when it comes to becoming a better listener, more attentive to God's Word, I am willing to come around. Five minutes a day for quiet reflection, on the Sunday Readings; it might be a word, a phrase or a thought; something that sticks out for you. Or, five minutes at the end of each day, to look back on the day's events. What was it all about, anyway? Was there anything God was telling you that your busy-ness prevented you from hearing? Either way, five minutes of listening, to open oneself up to God and His Word; it can make a world of difference.

Some days it will seem as if the heavens are torn apart by God, as at the time of Jesus' Baptism. At other times, it may seem less obvious and more subtle, like the morning dew or a gentle rain. Come, all who thirst. Come, all who hunger. Let us take the time to hear His voice, the Word of God, made flesh in Christ and in our lives each day.