

# Saint Mary's Newsletter: May

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**DUE TO THE LOCKDOWN ALL SERVICES ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE – Should the Lockdown level in May be lowered to enable us to gather again, the roster will be sent out.**

## *Psalm 4*

1 Answer me when I pray,

O God, my defender!

When I was in trouble, you helped me.

Be kind to me now and hear my prayer.

2 How long will you people insult me?

How long will you love what is worthless

and go after what is false?

3 Remember that the LORD has chosen the righteous for his own,

and he hears me when I call to him.

4 Tremble with fear and stop sinning;

think deeply about this,

when you lie in silence on your beds.

5 Offer the right sacrifices to the LORD,

and put your trust in him.

6 There are many who pray:

“Give us more blessings, O LORD.

Look on us with kindness!”

7 But the joy that you have given me

is more than they will ever have

with all their grain and wine.

8 When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace;

you alone, O LORD, keep me perfectly safe.

Some memories...



### What does it mean that God speaks in a still small voice?

There is only one place in Scripture where God is said to speak in a “still small voice,” and it was to Elijah after his dramatic victory over the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:20-40; 19:12). Told that Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, king of Israel, was seeking to kill him, Elijah ran into the wilderness and collapsed in exhaustion. God sent an angel with food and water to strengthen him, told him to rest, and then sent him to Horeb. In a cave there, Elijah voices his complaint that all of God’s prophets had been killed by Jezebel and he alone had survived. God instructed him to stand on the mountain in His presence. Then the Lord sent a mighty wind which broke the rocks in pieces; then He sent an earthquake and a fire, but His voice was in none of them. After all that, the Lord spoke to Elijah in the still small voice, or “gentle whisper.”

The point of God speaking in the still small voice was to show Elijah that the work of God need not always be accompanied by dramatic revelation or manifestations. Divine silence does not necessarily mean divine inactivity. Zechariah 4:6 tells us that God’s work is “not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” meaning that overt displays of power are not necessary for God to work.

Because He is God, He is not confined to a single manner of communicating with His people. Elsewhere in Scripture, He is said to communicate through a whirlwind (Job 38:1), to announce His presence by an earthquake (Exodus 19:18), and to speak in a voice that sounds like thunder (1 Samuel 2:10; Job 37:2; Psalm 104:7; John 12:29). In Psalm 77:18 His voice is compared to both thunder and a whirlwind. And in Revelation 4:5, we’re told that lightning and thunder proceed from the throne in heaven.

Nor is God limited to natural phenomena when He speaks. All through Scripture, He speaks through His prophets over and over. The common thread in all the prophets is the phrase, “Thus says the Lord.” He speaks through the writers of Scripture. Most graciously, however, He speaks through His Son, the Lord Jesus. The writer to the Hebrews opens his letter with this truth: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Hebrews 1:1–2).

The difference between God speaking through the thunder and the whirlwind, then through the still, small voice, can be also considered as showing the difference between the two dispensations of law and grace. The law is a voice of terrible words and was given amidst a tempest of wind, thunder, and lightning, attended by an earthquake (Hebrews 12:18–24), but the gospel is a gentle voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and the free gift of salvation through Christ. The law breaks the rocky hearts of men in pieces, shakes their consciences, and fills their minds with a sense of God’s fiery wrath and the punishment they deserve, and then the gospel speaks gently to them of the peace and pardon available in Christ.

It is less important how God speaks to us than what we do with what He says. God speaks most clearly to us in this day through His Word. The more we learn it, the more ready we will be to recognize His voice when He speaks, and the more likely we are to obey what we hear.

### This Month in Christian History:

**2 May 373:** The death of Saint Athanasius the Great, bishop of Alexandria (328-73). Known today as the “Father of Orthodoxy”, Athanasius was the first Christian writer to list the twenty seven books of the New Testament that we have today. He also influenced what is now known as the “Athanasian Creed”.



### Parish Giving

Please consider giving to the parish via Automatic Payment. Did you know that St Mary’s has to pay for our Vicar and all other costs of running a Parish, as well as giving a proportion to the Diocese? Please help us to be sustainable by giving via Automatic Payment. It is an easy way to give and is useful for the parish in running its budget. The Parish Bank Account is:

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