Office of the Vice President for Mission

TO: The Gonzaga Community
FROM: Alan Yost, S.J.
SUBJ: Moment for Mission
DATE: October 21, 2014

Listening for God

Does God listen to me? If God has spoken to so many other famous people before me, why not me? Why not now? How can I learn to recognize God’s voice in my life?

Many people think that hearing God’s voice is a choice between hallucinating and being very holy. Most of us don’t really want either. But God doesn’t just talk to saints. If God is love, then God eagerly wants to be relationship with each one of us, regardless of our sins, imperfections, or distractions. Communication is foundational to relationships between humans. It stands to reason that it should be crucial in our relationship with God.

That yearning we feel, sometimes experienced as a profound emptiness that we long to fill, comes from our desire to be in relationship with God, to enter more deeply into the mind and heart of our loving God. The trouble is that most of us haven’t learned how to listen for the still, quiet whisper of God in our lives. Life is so crowded with sounds and noises that we sometimes don’t even hear the earthly ones, never mind the supernatural one.

So why doesn’t God just speak up? God’s voice is powerful and compelling when we do finally hear it. Scripture and tradition have it that no one can see the face of God directly nor hear the voice of God directly and live. Love doesn’t want to harm us and God never forces us into anything. God’s voice must remain subtle in order to protect us and our free will, to invite us to freely accept God’s will.

We don’t have to be great saints to hear God’s voice, but we can certainly learn from the saints who have had their own experiences.