

may 2020

‘THE SENSATION OF SILENCE CANNOT BE HELPED.’
- JOHN UPDIKE

PRAYMK

Having a one-sided conversation can get very frustrating very quickly.

Sometimes our prayers can feel like this, quite often, actually. But I wonder if, even at a time like this, we would really want a noisy, chatty, ‘cooperative’ God? John Updike, in his autobiography, writes, ‘The sensation of silence cannot be helped; a loud and evident God would be a bully, an insecure tyrant... instead of, as He is, a bottomless encouragement to our faltering and frightened being.’

So when we are faltering and frightened because of a global pandemic, or dementia or cancer or poverty or unemployment, or abuse, or just everyday frustration, and God is silent, how do we become aware of Him?

Michael Mayne, in his book **This Sunrise of Wonder**, writes, ‘God likes matter...rock, water, wood, grass, birds, corn, grapes, cells. Not only does God like it but he clothes himself in it. It is one of his languages.’

When we take our daily exercise this month, perhaps we could look and listen out for that ‘Bottomless Encouragement.’ We might notice God in the design of a seedpod, or the architecture of a bungalow. We might spend a few moments studying our hands and the way they

move. We might wonder at the potential of an egg either to feed us or to house the embryo of a chick.

Yes, we can bring our worries and our questions and our petitions to our loving God. But we can also stand or sit amazed and wondering at the rich and very evident earth which can speak to us, if we can hear it.

Is it too noisy, though? Our heads can get full up so quickly, especially when we are afraid. Reach out your hand and put it on the surface where you sit, a wall nearby or the table in front of you. Is it steady? Our faith might wobble but God is steady. Always.

A bottomless encouragement, clothed in brick, water, wood, birdsong, neighbours, human flesh and blood, bread and wine can sometimes tell us more than an audible god-voice ever could.

When God is silent, isn’t that a relief in a noisy world? Shout at God, deliver a list of all the people who have let you down, or of those who are sick or suffering. Do let God know exactly how you feel and think. It may feel one-sided, but it isn’t. God is encouragement. Always. You are doing your best, and it is enough.

Look out for more PrayMK videos and resources over the coming weeks.

Families -

Sit quietly. Make a list of things you can

- hear
- smell
- see
- touch
- taste

How many did you count?

Do you think God can speak to you through those things?

Say thank you!

