

10th Friday of Ordinary Time “The Importance of Prayer”
Fr. Frank Schuster
June 12, 2020

Today is my 21st anniversary to the priesthood. I guess I am now old enough to drink! I really lucked out that my 20th anniversary was last year and my 50th birthday is next year. Fr. Johnson and Fr. Connelly were not so lucky. Fr. Johnson’s 20th Anniversary was just a couple days ago and Fr. Connelly’s 25th anniversary was yesterday. And so, I would like to offer up their intentions at today’s mass in gratitude for their ministry.

The first reading from Kings is one of my favorites. Whenever someone asks me how to hear God speaking to them, I think of this story about Elijah and how God was not in the wind, earthquake or fire, but rather in a tiny whispering sound. There is a “hum” just under the surface of this world that if we learn how to quiet our minds and hearts we can hear God anytime we like. This is why monasteries are usually located out in the quiet of a countryside. Since I became a seminarian over a quarter century ago to the present day, I have never had a problem hearing God when I quiet my mind sufficiently.

What keeps people from having a relationship with God is all the noise around us 24/7. We need to learn how to turn off our screens, turn off our phones, and become comfortable in the silence. There is a God-shaped hole in our hearts that we fill with all the wrong things. And when we allow the noise of this world overtake our hearts, it can feel a little bit like Gehenna inside, as Jesus warns us about in our Gospel reading. We would be far happier if we just cut off whatever noise in our life that is keeping us from a deeper relationship with God. It is very difficult to do, sinners that we are.

This is why it is sometimes wise to find a mountain somewhere in the wilderness where we can filter out the noise so to hear God speaking to us in that tiny whispering sound that exists just under the surface of this world. And if we can’t make a trip like that, there are other ways to make that pilgrimage like making time to pray in the church during our open church hours, finding a quiet trail to walk on so to reflect on the beauty of this world or just finding even a quiet room in the house where we can be alone for a while can really help. And when we quiet our minds enough to hear God’s voice, you will know that it is God speaking to you when you hear the word Jesus. Because, as Archbishop Sartain liked to say, when you hear God speak to you the name of his Son Jesus, he has already answered every one of your prayers. This is because when God gave us his Son Jesus, he has given us his everything.