

LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS



A Column by
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Speak, Lord, Your Servant is Listening

What is prayer? It is a conversation with God. It is a *conversation*, not a monologue. That means that we must listen, as well as talk to God. Last week, we discussed talking to God, so this week, we will begin our study of listening to God, which will take us through the next few weeks.

Early in Scripture, we find God actually talking to various people. For example, **“God said to Noah:** I see that the end of all mortals has come.... Make yourself an ark of gopherwood...” [GN 6:13-14 *emphasis added*]. God also spoke to Abraham, Moses and many others. Most people don’t hear God speak to them in such a clear way today, so we must find other ways to “listen to God.”

This week, we will discuss one of the clearest ways that God speaks to us today – through those same Scriptures. The question then comes to us, “Where do I start?” It is true that the Bible is big book, so I’d like to give you a few hints on how to get started reading Scripture.

Some people have chosen to let the Bible fall open to a page and read whatever is on that page. That may work for some, but it also can pose some problems, especially since you will be reading those passages out of context, which can be confusing.

Might I suggest a couple of other methods for choosing readings? First, I would suggest that you read one book of the Bible from start to finish.

If you plan to choose this method, start by reading one of the Gospels, especially Matthew or Luke.

The reason I suggest these two books is that they are mostly narrative in nature, which makes them easier to read and understand, and they cover the entire life of Jesus from His Birth to His Ascension. Just read one or two chapters a day. I promise you will learn something about Jesus with every chapter.

Another way to choose Scripture is to read from the daily or Sunday readings of the Church. Every day the Church has selected at least one reading from the Old or New Testament, one Psalm, and one selection from a Gospel. The citations for these readings are published in our bulletin every week. They can also be found on several websites or apps, such as the US Bishops’ website, uscgb.org/bible/readings/. One of the advantages of these websites and apps is that the full text of the reading is included, in case you have trouble finding the reading in your Bible.

Some may choose to use other guides to daily or Sunday Scripture readings. Often these guides include either the text of the readings or a reflection on them. Some of the guides that you can use include “One Bread, One Body,” which lists the daily readings and has a reflection on them, or the *Magnificat*, which has the text of the readings and often includes a reflection for the day, as well. You can find some copies of “One Bread, One Body” on the back shelves of the Church, and the *Magnificat* is available in our Religious Shop. [You can also find a new Bible there if you don’t have one.] So, this week, take your Bible off the bookshelf, and read the words the God wants you to hear. Next week, we’ll discuss ways to reflect further on the Scriptures you’re reading.