

Are You Listening?



White noise and static seems to surround our communication pathways. The image represents talking and listening in parallel conversations that sometimes cross but sometimes collide as well.

171. We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders. Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God's love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives.¹

Noise pollution can happen even when our surroundings are still and quiet. We are bombarded by an extraordinary amount of sound every day and night, and that can be our excuse for not listening to our neighbor, to God or to ourselves, but the distraction appears to be deeper than that. It is an attitude of the heart and soul that when quiet enough, it will be receptive to the one who wants to give, and to the one who wants to be listened to. We can turn down our tunes and tv's, radios and radioactive din of high and low pitched hums and squeals, but if we are not ready to listen from the inside-out no absence of sound will be enough.

How can I prepare myself to Listen? Maybe just being aware...is the beginning of the journey of a selfless encounter.

1. APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS TO THE BISHOPS, CLERGY, CONSECRATED PERSONS AND THE LAY FAITHFUL ON THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL IN TODAY'S WORLD