

The Bible Corner

Cindy Cottone



Sometimes God speaks in whispers

When we pray, we are having a conversation with God. Conversations are always two-sided. Sometimes, when we pray, we can be so busy telling God what's on our minds that we forget to listen.

It is true that God's answers to our prayers may come in the very dramatic way of a miracle at times. But we should never limit God to a set pattern. His answers to our prayers come in many shapes and sizes. God does answer prayers in very quiet ways, too. Another mistake we can make when we pray to God about something is to have the answer all worked out. We are so busy looking for our answer that we miss God's answer, which is always the best way.

Elijah was a prophet in the Old Testament who had some of these experiences with prayer. God had appointed Elijah to show the Jews the right way. The trouble with the world at that time was the same problem we still have today — how to do the right thing when everyone around you is doing the wrong thing.

God's people, the Jews, were surrounded on all sides by foreigners who didn't believe in the one, true God. Instead, the foreigners worshipped many false gods. Sometimes the Jews forgot all about our God and started

worshipping these false gods, too. It took someone like the prophet Elijah to get the Jews back on the right path again.

When Elijah prayed, dramatic miracles happened, and he got very used to hearing from God in this way. One time, Elijah was traveling along and he was very tired and hungry. There was a terrible drought going on, and none of the crops were growing. This drought was a type of punishment sent by God because this was one of the times that the Jews had turned to false gods.

God told Elijah to go to a certain village, and a widow there would feed him. When he got there, he asked this widow for some bread. The widow had one young son, and they were very poor. Things were so bad because of the drought that when Elijah asked her for food she said, "All I have left in the house is a small handful of flour and a little bit of cooking oil at the bottom of a jar."

So Elijah answered, "Sounds good to me! Make the bread. God has told me that the flour and oil won't run out until the rains come and the crops grow again."

Elijah stayed at this widow's house for quite some time. And the flour and oil never did run out!

Later, an even greater miracle hap-

pened in this same widow's house. One day, the widow's son became very sick and died. Elijah took the boy's body upstairs and prayed to God for a long time. He prayed that God would restore the life of this boy. God answered Elijah's prayers with another miracle. The boy lived.

A short time after these two miracles, Elijah was having some pretty big problems. King Ahab was king of Israel. He was a wicked king and is known today as one of the worst kings of Israel. When he married Jezebel, a foreigner, he began worshipping Baal, the false god his new wife worshipped.

Elijah went to see Ahab and told him that his worship of Baal had caused the drought. Then Elijah had all of the false prophets of Baal killed.

When King Ahab told Jezebel what had happened, she vowed to her false gods that she would kill Elijah. Elijah fled into the wilderness and went to live in a cave in the mountains. Elijah must have had many prayer conversations with God. Maybe Elijah was expecting another big miracle answer from God. Now, you really can't blame Elijah. If every time that you were in trouble and prayed, a miracle came as the answer, pretty soon you'd start expecting miracles all of the time, too.

Elijah prayed and nothing happened, and he became very discouraged. So this time, he prayed, "God, I am sick and tired of this whole mess. I've had enough. It's time for me to die."

Elijah made a very big mistake here. When we pray, we are giving our problems over to God to fix. We are supposed to have complete faith in God to fix our problems His way, not our way.

God didn't take Elijah's life. He told Elijah to go to the entrance of the cave

and wait there for his answer. By this time Elijah probably was thinking that another big miracle was about to happen. First, there was a mighty wind storm. God's answer was not found there. Then a terrible earthquake hit. God's answer was not found there either. Next Elijah saw a huge fire on the mountain. Surely, this is God's answer, he thought. But there was still no answer.

Finally, it got very quiet, and in the sound of a gentle whisper, Elijah heard God's answer to his prayers. Elijah was to go back to the people of Israel. God would not allow him to be killed by Jezebel. And God sent another prophet, Elisha, to be his helper. So Elijah went back and did it God's way.

God always answers our prayers. But, when we go to Him in prayer, it's important to wait patiently and listen for His answers. We must listen very carefully in both our minds and hearts, because sometimes God whispers.

For discussion:

1. God punished the people of Israel with a drought because they were worshipping false gods. What false gods do people worship today?

2. Why did Elijah have to wait so long on the mountain for God's answer?

3. God is everywhere and speaks to us in the quiet of a sunrise or sunset, or a beautiful starry night. What quiet times in your own life have you felt God speaking to you?

For further reading:

The story of Elijah and the widow can be found in the Bible in 1 Kings 17.

Do you have a question about the Bible? Mail your questions to: Cindy Cottone c/o the Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Neighbors in the News



Nazareth Academy's director of development, Sister Carol Cimino (also of Jeopardy fame) has been awarded a plaque by the Nestle-Katherine Beich Corporation for outstanding achievements in student fundraising. She is shown above at left with Nazareth Principal Sister Elaine Englert. According to corporate officials, Nazareth's is the most successful student chocolate sale on a percentage per pupil basis. Over the past seven years, the academy's 600 students have sold about \$350,000 worth of chocolate bars.

Sister Carol was also recently elected vice president of the New York State Association of Catholic School Administrators. The organization, which acts as a lobbyist in the state legislature and as a source of information for administrators, represents more than 1,000 elementary and secondary schools.



The U.S. Postal Service is fighting world hunger with a commemorative "Help End Hunger" stamp issued Oct. 16 on the 40th anniversary of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and the fifth World Food Day. Above, Postmaster Charles Schubert (far right) presents a framed sheet of the stamps to Carol Crossed and Tom Ferraro, representatives of the Food for People Network of Rochester. At the far left is Postal Clerk Domenick White, also a member of Food for People. White was instrumental in getting the local post office involved in World Food Day activities.

Dr. John Romano, a nationally known psychiatrist, and Mary Cariola, a pioneer in the care of multiply handicapped children were honored at Nazareth College's Casa Italiana recently at the Columbus Day Recognition Awards Celebration. The program recognizes persons of Italian heritage who have contributed significantly to the betterment of society and the quality of life in Rochester.

Cariola, 89, founded the first parent-sponsored training center for multiply handicapped children in the U.S. in 1949 and served as its volunteer executive director until 1968. Formerly known as the Day Care Training Center for Handicapped Children of Monroe County, it was renamed the Mary Cariola Children's Center in 1977.

As department chairman for 25 years, Dr. Romano guided the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester to national prominence. He remains active as the department's chairman emeritus.



Portrait artist Debbie Foster Parker fulfilled a long-time dream with her creation of an oil painting of Christ's image based on the Shroud of Turin. Her interest was prompted by reports of a scientific evaluation of the shroud. She painted the portrait using the photo negative above.

Prints of the painting are available for distribution. Parker has decided to donate the proceeds from their sale to benefit world hunger programs and other charitable causes. To order a print, write her at Box 19, Erieville, NY, 13061, enclosing a check for \$10.

"The closer we come to Mary, the closer we come to her Son," Monsignor Arthur Ratigan told members of the Genesee Curia of the Legion of Mary at their annual reunion dinner, Sunday, Oct. 6, at the Big Elms Restaurant in Hornell.

The monsignor, who formerly served as pastor at St. Ambrose Church and director

of Catholic Charities, was the event's principal speaker.

New officers of the curia, which convenes monthly in St. Mary's School, Dansville, were also introduced. They are: Dorothy Somers of Nunda, vice president; John Burns of Nunda, secretary; and Marian Meyers of Hornell, treasurer. Father Andrew Teuschel is spiritual director.



Two new assistant chaplains have begun their ministries at Nazareth College. They are Sister Kathleen Weider, SSJ, (right) a part-time lecturer in religious studies at the college, and Mary Lynn Gras (left), a candidate for ordination under the care of the Presbytery of the Genesee Valley.

Along with religious counseling and spiritual direction, both women will help to coordinate programs like Big Sister-Big Brother, Oxfam Day of Fasting, ministry to the elderly, blood drives, human rights concerns, women's issues, retreats, bible study and prayer groups.

Sister Kathleen is director of Medaille House, a community of sisters and lay women committed to prayer, a simple lifestyle and service to those in need. She has been active in the sanctuary movement and as a volunteer at Corpus Christi Parish's homeless shelter. Previously, Sister Kathleen taught religious studies at Nazareth Academy and served the Sisters of St. Joseph as director for vocations.

Gras has served as an intern at Westminster Presbyterian Church during the past year and has led the development of a team to work with youth and to plan and evaluate adult education programs.

Eighteen seniors at Our Lady of Mercy High School have been named to the Catherine McAuley Chapter of the National Honor Society. They were inducted into the society for their excellence in leadership, scholarship, service and character. A reception and induction ceremony for the girls is planned later in the year. Bea Wolford, a

science teacher at Mercy, is the society's moderator.

New members are: Toni Chiarenza of Henrietta, Coleen Curtin of Brighton, Carol Calcagni of Fairport, Kristin Boehm of Brighton, Jennifer Meisenzahl of East Rochester, Ann and Karen DiBiasi and Erin Maloney of Pittsford, Andrea Sims of Honeoye Falls, Carol Henkel of Rochester, Donna DeKing of Webster, Barbara Gerace of Fairport, Melissa Agustin of Dansville, AnnMarie Carnevale of Webster, Patricia Reidman, Judy Fuller and Jan Burroughs of Rochester and Pearl Ratunil of Mt. Morris.

At its annual meeting, the Council of Homes of Rochester and Monroe County elected new officers to two-year terms. The council provides advocacy and assistance to 12 not-for-profit long-term care facilities in the area.

Elected were: Sister Marie Michelle Peartree of St. Ann's Home/The Heritage, chairperson; Loren Ranalette of Episcopal Church Home and James Dewhirst of the Rochester Friendly Home, administrators.



Grand Knight John Goosley of the Pope John XXIII Council No. 7707 in Spencerport (left) was presented the Knights of Columbus "Star Council Award" by state membership Director Raymond Pfeifer this month. The award is presented to councils that have earned the Columbian Award for activities, the Father McGivney Award for membership increase and the Founder's Award for promoting the order's insurance program.

The Spencerport Council also won first place in New York state for youth activities. The winning entry was a Statue of Liberty essay contest offered last October. The council won second place for its state C & B Program ticket sales drive in the "Most Books Sold Per Member" category. The council bulletin, called "The Knightly News," also placed fourth among districts 101-129.