

August 13, 2023



THE LORD PASSING BY

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

Today's First Reading

At the mountain of God, Horeb, Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter. Then the LORD said to him, "Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will be passing by."

A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD—but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake — but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

After the earthquake there was fire—but the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

1 KINGS 19:9a, 11-13a

Reflection

Moses and Elijah experienced similar manifestations of God on the same mountain (Ex. 19:16ff; 1 Kgs 19:9). In Scripture, mountains are classic meeting places of God, who comes down to the mountain from heaven while humans go up the mountain from the earth for the meeting. On this particular mountain (Mt. Horeb/Mt. Sinai), the prophet Elijah, who is fleeing from King Ahab and his wife Jezebel, hides out in a cave. Instead of escaping into a mountain cave, the LORD God tells him to leave the cave and stand outside on the mountain because the LORD “will be passing by.” Various traditional nature manifestations of Divine active presence occur: wind, earthquake, and fire. None of these, however, indicate God’s presence to Elijah. The last signal of the mighty God’s presence is simply “a tiny whispering sound.” Notable is Elijah’s response: he hides his face in his cloak and moves to the entrance of the cave. There he and God have a conversation that ends in his leaving to ultimately face King Ahab and Jezebel.



Sierra Nevada Mountains
Photo by Alicia Rodriguez

For Pondering

- Where do you and the LORD God meet these days?

- What are some of the ways you are aware of God's presence? [“wind” “earthquake” “fire” “tiny whispering sound” OR...]
 - How have you responded to the Divine Presence recently?
-

For Prayer

*LORD God,
I stand waiting for You to pass by me
showing Your concern and care for me.
May I be attentive and alert to You in my life
whether You come in whispers or shouts.
Amen.*

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