



Psalm 46:10a ***“Be still and know that I am God.”*** NRSV

Dear Friends,

The great writer and Christian spiritual leader of some years back, Fr. Henri Nouwen wrote a book about the value of silence in our relationship to God to push back on the word filled noisy world that he experienced all around him. I believe his observations about a wordy noisy world are even more true today. It especially true when we have internet social platforms to speak our mind instantly like twitter.

Sometimes I think we are so used to noise or filling a void by saying something that silence can seem incredibly awkward, and there seems an innate rush to fill silence with anything. In fact, I think when a moment of silence is asked for in certain situations there is a better than even chance the moment will be “managed” to pass very quickly!

Towards the end of Psalm 46, whose main theme is the awesome power and help of God, comes not a word of praise, petition, or protest, but a word of silence and trust in God: ***“Be Still.”*** It is an invitation to quiet our hearts, minds, and voices to fully trust God to act when we come to him with our prayers, our concerns, our sadness, our anger, depression or whatever deep emotion is weighing down upon us in an opportune and oppressive way. I like to think a good scriptural passage illustrating this is the story of the great prophet of the Old Testament, Elijah, who just coming off an overwhelming demonstration of the power of God over the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:20-40), is deeply depressed afterward, because all his demonstration of the power of the true God got him was Queen Jezebel’s order to kill him ASAP.

When he finally encounters God on Mt. Horeb, several powerful demonstrations take place that tell us quite incredibly that God was not “present” in any of them (1 Kings 19:11). Encounter with God for Elijah begins with “sheer silence” (1 Kings 19:12). Only after that silence was the voice of God and direction from God given to him.

Many years ago, there was a commercial slogan for a pain relief medication pill that went like this: “For fast acting relief, take two..... (whatever the name of the medication was)”. When we need “fast acting relief” maybe the answer is not more words or even panic, but to listen to the Psalmist, ***“Be still and know that I am God.”***

Your brother in Christ,  
John

