



Rev. Rosemary Doran

## *Rosemary's Reflections*

*February 2017*

Not too long ago my husband and I had our hearing tested. It's almost fifty-five years since we both said "I will" – at least I think that's what I heard us say! – but in recent years, we seem to have been conducting parallel conversations. Take driving for example. At least one of us has to keep our eyes on the road, which means we can't lip read at the same time, so many pearls of wisdom – and essential directions – get lost. On occasion, this has led to recriminations – "I said...", "Well, I thought you said...", "No, I didn't..." And then there's the Battle of the TV. The volume's too high. The volume's too low. "Turn it up." "I did turn it up." "Well, I still can't hear it." And the problem spreads to other areas of life – ordering at McDonald's or Tim Horton's for example. What with the background of loud music and people on cellphones and the sometimes unfamiliar accent of the person taking the order, it's a good idea to check, not once, but twice, what you actually get on your plate!

When I began to think about this failure to hear properly, I realised that it can also affect our faith lives, though in a somewhat different way. It's not that we can't hear God but that we choose not to. I remember as a child being puzzled by some bible verses which talked about "listening but not hearing". Didn't make much literal sense to me. As I got older, of course I got the point. God 'speaks' to us in many ways – through the Bible, through creation, through relationships, through life experiences. Sometimes, we hear but don't want to hear, so we ignore the message or the parts of the Word that we don't like. Going along with it might mean changing our habits, and we're not very keen on that.

Sometimes, we want the message but are listening for it in the wrong way in the wrong place. We expect it to come with crashing cymbals but God may choose to speak in the "still, small voice". Maybe like Gerry and me, we need to read the signs and change our ways.

So, we signed up with the audiologist and were duly given the 'tuning fork' tests to see what the actual limitations of our hearing were and how they could be treated. One of us ended up with a device, one was given a reprieve for a year. (I'm not going to tell you which is which!)

Maybe we should subject our conversations with God to a similar test. Maybe we should figure what's the best way for us to listen attentively and receptively – in a quiet place? at a quiet time? with an open mind? Maybe we should welcome new ways of receiving the age-old Word and see the difference it makes in our lives and relationships. Just like Gerry and me and the hearing aid.

*Rosemary*