

## Rosemary's Reflections

I live on what must be one of the noisiest roads in Brampton, close to the corner of McLaughlin and Steeles. I'm convinced that every fire truck in the city is routed through that area, screaming through the intersection with horns blaring and sirens wailing. Traffic moves fast. Engines – and stereos – throb and thump when drivers stop at the red light. Souped-up cars screech by. We live in a Seniors' Residence. There is a carillon directly outside our windows. It plays hymns every hour on the hour from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Now, I love hymns – but not when they disturb my after-lunch nap or drown out a phone call! There is a constant background of noise in our area, which you get used to but which can eat away at your sense of wellbeing.

Sometimes, though, the noise stops. If I waken in the night, I can tell roughly what time it is without consulting the clock. The sound of traffic is practically non-existent between 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m., and I am a happy camper, body relaxed, mind at rest, peace and quiet restored.

We live in a very noisy world. It's difficult to go out for a meal without having your ears bombarded by loud music. You can't sit in the doctor's office or on the bus or even walk along the street without being forced to listen to someone on their cell phone. And then there's the hospital. Having spent too much time in Emerg over recent months, I sometimes wonder how anybody ever gets better in hospital! Machines beep, phones ring, bells chime. People are paged, codes are called day and night, chaos seems to reign. I recently read something about a proposal to build new hospitals, where each patient would have a private room and noise would be kept to an absolute minimum. The thinking is that exposure to unnecessary noise can actually make people sicker rather than better.

Silence is important in our day-to-day lives and also in our spiritual lives. If we're not careful, the voice of God can be drowned out by the noise of our world, for God often speaks in the silence. Remember the Old Testament story of Elijah the prophet? He was on the run from Queen Jezebel who wanted to kill him. In the midst of a storm Elijah, frightened and exhausted, took refuge in a cave. There God spoke to him, not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire that accompanied the storm but “in a still, small voice.” If we are to cope with the demands of our living, we need to make time intentionally to hear God's “still, small voice” in our minds and in our hearts, quietly guiding, reassuring, strengthening us. As we start into another church year, let's plan to take time out with God on a regular basis and listen. It's the best way to live.

Rev. Rosemary Doran

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