

Sometimes God grabs our attention

God speaks to us in ordinary ways, and God speaks to us in ways that are 'out of the ordinary.' What does it mean to have God speak to us in an 'out of the ordinary' way? Every person of faith could answer this question (and it would be a fascinating exercise to invite such a sharing around a meal table), but here let me recount an example from Veronica's story and in her own words:

"Almost twenty years ago someone invited me to a Life in the Spirit Seminar, a prayerful weekend of presentations through which participants are invited to grow in their awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence in their lives. My mother was keen to go and, out of curiosity, I went along with her. During that weekend we formed different groups and looked at scripture. To my surprise a young woman from one of the other groups (I did not know her very well) shared with me a scripture passage which she felt had come to her from the Holy Spirit and was meant for me. The passage was from Isaiah 62 and it read: "No longer will you be called forsaken nor your land abandoned." When I read this I was flabbergasted. And puzzled. What did it mean? It made no sense to me at all. I had a good marriage and a lovely family life. I had no sense of being 'forsaken.'

"Later on, however, my life changed. My husband's business

venture started to go sour, and he did not cope. He went down the coast where we had a caravan, suffering from depression, and within a couple of years he was diagnosed with cancer and died. Did I feel abandoned, forsaken? You bet your life I did. We had eight children, one of them with a disability and with huge challenges. Two of the children were still at school. We all had to eat so I ran the family business on my own.

"By God's grace, I coped. And the scripture verse from the prophet Isaiah rang true. God did not rest until things were going alright for me. I knew God was on my side and no matter what came my way I would survive."

Most of the time God speaks to us through ordinary events: the fruit of our day's labour, the insights of a book, a conversation with family or friends, the ups and downs of our physical wellbeing and our day to day encounters with the natural world around us. We don't need to be overtly 'religious' to appreciate the impact of these moments, yet as people of faith we find within them the hand and blessing of God.

But every so often there is that flash of God's 'out of the ordinary' presence. God speaks to us – rather, grabs our attention - through an apparently inexplicable event, a moment of divine inspiration, a small 'miracle' that leaves us amazed, perhaps even a little unnerved that the Lord would act so dramatically on our behalf, even

if we are the only ones privy to this 'divine visitation.' These moments, too, are the blessing and reassurance that God-is-with-us, and they are more common than we think, given that people are often reluctant to speak of such graces to others. As amazed as we are at the time, as people of faith we come to recognise these graces as a normal, though less frequent, part of our relationship with God.

God speaks to us in ordinary ways, and God speaks to us in ways that are 'out of the ordinary.' In our journey of faith we can expect and treasure both.

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