

January 20, 2024



Daily Reflections

SACRED LISTENING

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

Today's Gospel Acclamation

"Open our hearts, O Lord, to listen to the words of your Son."

ACTS 16:14b

Reflection

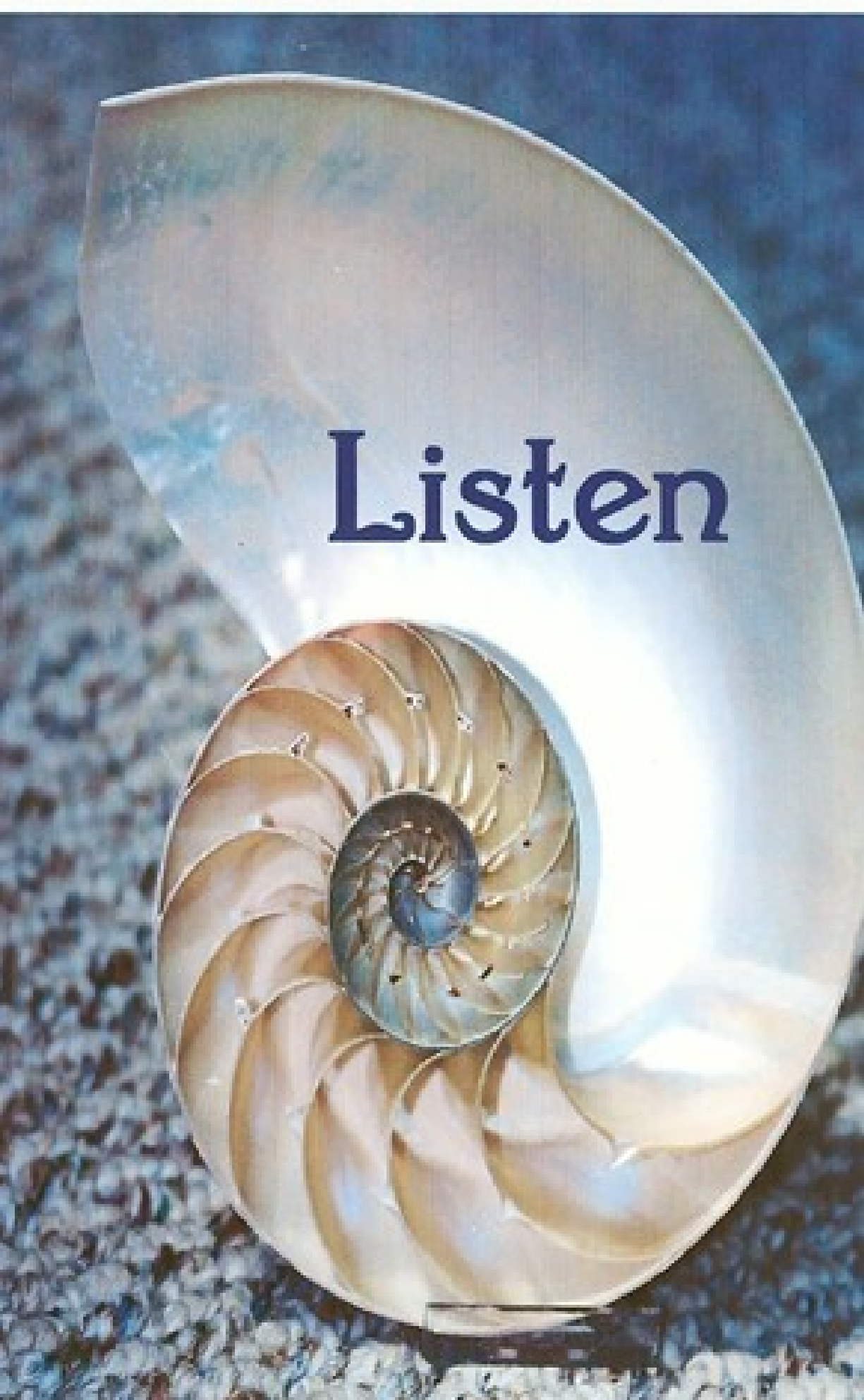
The readings today are all about listening deeply to God, to lived experience, and to the stories of trusted friends. Listening is not the same as hearing. I have found that three qualities or skills enhance my ability to listen more consciously: **attitude, attention, and adapting**. In the context of faith, *listening* is the meaning of obedience and there lies its potential to be transformative.

How might I “open my heart to listen” to God within and around me? Setting a time each day for silence and consciously choosing to listen to the Word of God in sacred scripture enables God to bear fruit in my life. In reflective silence, I

open myself to listen to the word, seeking to be attentive to that which stirs my inner being.

The three skills that enhance good listening are useful in living life to the full and helpful when reflecting on the Word of God in Scripture. I am responsible for my **attitude** toward what is read, heard, experienced. I strive to pay **attention** to the subtle nudges, emotional tugs, gentle stirrings as I read and reflect on the word. Then, reflecting on the graces stirring, I am invited to **adapt** to the ways of God that are life-giving, sometimes challenging, and always given and received in love.

- A positive **attitude** paves the way for open-mindedness. Developing a positive attitude requires a conscious choice to see the upside, to re-frame my thinking, to seek out grace in the moment, to expect and watch for God, and to assume the best in the other and in every circumstance.
 - Purposeful **attention** to the graces and insights in every situation is another choice I need to make. Each day I choose to discern the subtle presence of God, for every moment holds the potential for a God experience. Attention is fostered when I allow my intuition, rather than my preconceptions, to see below the surface of things -- when I try to be curious and willing to learn even in the familiar. I practice noticing the little things, the quiet stirrings of my emotions, and move to a place of wonder and gratitude. I am on alert for the hidden presence of God in everything.
 - **Adapting** follows as I reflect on the experience, discerning the deeper meaning as I claim the gift within the movements of grace that reveal both inviting and challenging opportunities. I am free to choose how to respond to the reality of my life, and all I am given to hold and to tend. Reflection on my autobiographical story helps my self-understanding and then opens to greater ability to choose my response.
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Listen

Photo from a meeting of the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph

For Pondering

"Open our hearts, O Lord, to listen to the words of your Son."

ACTS 16:14b

Consider the reality of your inner attitude in life and prayer.

- What enables your ability to pay attention to the presence, grace, and love of God?
 - How do you generally respond to the graces given you each day?
 - In what ways might you hone your attitude, your attention, and your ability to adjust to the ways of God?
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For Prayer

*Open my heart, O God,
to listen to Your Word and recognize your Presence in my life.
Help me adjust my attitude toward life
and, in paying closer attention, discover you with me,
calling, supporting, and guiding me toward
the good, the holy, and all that promises a loving response toward life.
Help me be faithful to all that you desire for me
so I might share your loving presence.
Amen.*

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