

A splash of water Image not found or type unknown Amadej Tausas

And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.'

Matthew 3:16-4:3

Where did that thought come from?! We've all had the experience of thinking something strange and wondering where the idea came from. If it's a good thought, we might say "I would never have thought something like that! It must be God." If it's a bad thought, we may feel that it reflects badly on us – or that it must have been the devil that put it there.

Our inner voices are a vital part of our conscious experience. They are also the fabric of our prayers. If we are wise, we learn to discern which ones are to be listened to. Jesus was obedient to the Spirit, who led him into the wilderness, but then he heard the voice of the tempter. This voice questioned what the voice from heaven had said at his baptism. Indirectly, it helped him because, in his dialogue with this voice, he clarified what his vocation as Son of God was to be. It would not be about self-serving miracles, about human glory, or avoidance of suffering. It would be a life of service and self-giving.

We know now that many people hear voices (out loud) who are not mentally ill. It is not the hearing of voices that we need to be afraid of. We all hear voices. We need courage to listen, and wisdom to discern what they mean.

A “Have a Go” habit: Centring prayer

- Sit still in a chair whilst you drink your cup of tea or coffee today.
- Repeat and breathe in the words of [Psalm 85:8](#) "I will listen for what the Lord says for He will speak peace".
- Whenever other thoughts come to you, acknowledge them and come back to the Psalm phrase. "He will speak Peace." Imagine this as the centre planet and the other thoughts orbiting around it. This is not thought control just choosing a focus.



Looking for support?

Explore services and organisations that can offer help and support

A solitary tree standing in a field.

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Next reflection

Read the next reflection in the series

The *#FaithAndMentalHealth* reflections were written by Rev Prof Chris Cook. Ruth Rice developed the "Have a go" habits.

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