

Early Summer, 2018

Greetings,

I recently watched the film “Silent Child.” Among its numerous awards, the movie won the 2017 Oscar for best “live action short film.”

Based on real life events, Silent Child tells the story of Libby, a profoundly deaf 4 year old. She is a child with almost no ability to communicate until a caring social worker begins teaching her sign language. (Heart-rending footage depicts her isolation at school & at home. Her mother typically addresses her from behind!)

Libby and Joanne, her BSL teacher, bond instantly. As she develops the ability to “hear” and “speak,” Libby transforms from a withdrawn, disabled child into a bright and lively little girl. Tragically, her parents consider signing “abnormal”. They decide that their child must learn lip reading & vocal speech, so Joanne - the first person who truly communicates with Libby - is fired. The final scene of the film shows Libby totally alone in the school playground.

“Silent Child” is a deeply moving film and I highly recommend it. But, as I pondered the story, it struck me that it also tells a powerful spiritual tale. Our Heavenly Parent loves to communicate with us – in any way, shape or form. Yet religion frequently controls that conversation. It determines our vocabulary, our style of speech and even the means by which we talk and listen. Many Christians in the English-speaking world, for example, believe that the English of James I (1566-1625) is God’s preferred language! From chanting to charismatic utterances, most faith traditions have recommended – or required – modes of communication with the Divine.

God places no such limits on our conversation! Our Heavenly Parent enjoys everything we have to say - however, whenever or wherever we choose to share. Listening to God and speaking with God is the essence of the spiritual life – and there’s no wrong way to go about it.

So go ahead and speak up – listen up too!

*“In the beginning was the communication and communication was with God and Communication was God. Communication was with God in the beginning. Through communication all things were made; without communication nothing was made that has been made. In Communication was life, and that life was the light of human beings”<sup>i</sup> (John 1: 1-5)*

Blessings,

*Brenda*

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<sup>i</sup> “Participating in God’s Communications,” Anglican Communion Communications Working Group.