

*And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the wind a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire a sound, a thin silence. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. 1Kings 19: 11-13.*

This experience of God comes to the prophet Elijah in a period of profound loneliness. He has defeated the prophets of the pagan god Baal, and is fleeing for his life from the reprisals of the wicked Queen Jezebel. Elijah is hiding away in a cave, a fugitive who has lost his peace, when God reveals himself to him in a humble sign. It is not in the thunder of wind or flame, but with that gentle breeze that God comes forward to meet a tired man, who thinks that he has failed on all fronts. God brings calm and peace to his soul, and so renewed and strengthened Elijah goes on to complete his prophetic calling .

Perhaps the last few months have found us feeling, like Elijah, useless and alone, threatened and frightened. Many of us have struggled to pray, and our minds and hearts have been filled with anxiety. Elijah teaches us to be still, to allow God to speak to our hearts in the silence so that we may be carried by him. One Christian writer has put it this way: 'Prayer is an exposure to the reality of God.' Allow yourself to be quiet and still so that you can be touched by the God who is love.