

## Pastor's Corner - December 11, 2011 - God is present in all

Last week I wrote about how God speaks to us not from somewhere outside of our experience but from within our joyful as well as painful experiences; yes, that **God even speaks to us within the wilderness of our lives**. Even when we try to banish God from our lives or try to avoid God, God always finds surprising ways to come back into our lives. If only we could recognize them, learn from them, discover in them the presence of God who calls forth, who challenges us to find deeper meaning in whatever happens to us.

Today's Scripture readings gives us the foundation for this truth: **God is the Ground of all Being**. Paul in the second reading, Letter to the **Romans 16:25-27**, will say that this gift of God is "the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, ...made known" in Jesus. By virtue of creation God is present all around us and in all. Even more amazing, **because of the Incarnation, because God decided to become one of us humans in Jesus, this same God is inside you and inside me, inside all**. In the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas, fragments of which are preserved in one Coptic manuscript of the Nag Hammadi Library in Egypt, we find the following sayings of Jesus: "If those who lead you say to you, See the Kingdom of God is in the sky, then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, It is in the sea, then the fish will precede you. Rather the kingdom of God is inside of you and all around you. ... From me did the all come forth, and unto me did the all extend. Split a piece of wood and I am there. Lift the stone and you will find me there." **There is no place where God is not; there is no human heart in which God does not dwell, because God is the Ground of All Being**. That does not mean that we can equate God with the world or that we can say that the world is God: a pantheistic view. God is absolute and independent of the world. But God who is in all has chosen to take on flesh in Jesus and through the mission of Jesus has chosen to become fully involved, incarnate in **this** world of ours.

In that beautiful first reading of **2 Samuel 7:1-16** we find God in dialogue with David through Nathan the prophet. Humans cannot contain the presence of God in a temple just as they were not able to contain God in a tent, in the ark, and just they were not able to contain God's presence later in a cathedral, in a tabernacle or any other human construct. However, **God decided to be contained, to be incarnate and present in human flesh in Mary**. Mary's YES (remember the symbols hung by the children in the Jesse tree) made it possible for God in Jesus to become in the words of Karl Rahner (*The Content of Faith*) "a historical, unique and irrevocable self-communication of God; ...this communication is God himself as God is, in and for God...; to this climactic moment God has ordered the whole of history from its very inception; ...God's irrevocable presence in the world gives history its fundamental orientation."

Because of our human failings this fundamental orientation that God's presence offers in Christ is not always recognizable in ourselves, in our world and at times in our church. Mary is a model and example to us that we too should say yes to God in our lives (last Sunday the children hung signs in the Jesse tree: "I will say yes to the Lord at all times"). Our yes says that we too need to allow the divine presence in Christ to be the creative, transforming and challenging force by which we, our church and our world will be re-aculturated and re-oriented to God. Just as Mary freely and willingly became the holy and sacred place for God's presence, so is each one of us called to make room in our lives for God, for Jesus, for the Spirit. Like Mary, we can become the sacred spaces of which the world is in so much need. Because of Jesus, the Kingdom of God, the presence of God is inside you and all around you: "open your souls and I am there and you will find me; open your arms to embrace one another, lift up the poor and the lowly ... break and share the bread; read and reflect the word; you will find me ... I am there."

Shalom!

Je Rolf, OP