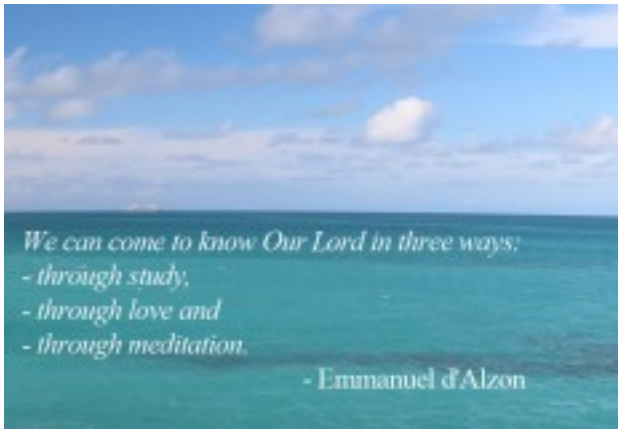


By Pat Haggerty

As young children we learn that God is everywhere. In fact, my little catechism from my French elementary school posed the question: Où est Dieu? The answer: Il est partout. (Where is God?/He is everywhere).

We were told that we could find God in ourselves, in others, in the world around us, in church, and particularly in the Eucharist. This is such a magnanimous concept, yet, one we believe in and attest to.

Sometimes we experience God in a truly remarkable way---one that touches the core of our very being. It is a true grace from God to be moved in such a way. It doesn't happen always, but it does happen. A friend recently told me of an experience she had at a Youth Mass. She said she felt truly embraced by God and was moved to tears. Many things throughout the liturgy brought her to this place of spirituality and sensitivity. We are blessed when such a feeling occurs.

We can feel these moments of closeness to God outside of the liturgy, as well. Many years ago, I was given a tour of a homeless shelter in Boston. Perhaps it was the way the tour was conducted; it could have been the voice of our guide; or it could have been the simplicity of the surroundings, but I felt totally connected to God. I almost felt like I was in a church or a sacred place. It was very real and stayed with me for quite a while. I treasured that experience!

We often hear of people feeling close to God in nature. Certainly the grandeur of the ocean or the loftiness of the mountains speak to the goodness and magnificence of God. I know that I feel extreme peace while gazing at the ocean, and I am not alone. There is a peace and tranquility there that emanates from God, I am sure.

Father James Stephen Behrens, OCSO, a Trappist monk from Georgia, speaks of finding God in a diner. He recounts his experience in his book *Grace Revisited* (Acta Publishing, 2011). In Father's essay, "Andy's Diner," he recounts stories of those he meets there and of what transpired. At one point, Father notes: "There was something sacramental to it all. Those people gave me something that made me think about and long for the truth and experience of God."(page 123, *Grace Revisited)*

Think about people and places that help you find God. Rejoice over this; it is a grace from our Beloved. If it happens to be a special person, pray for that individual. If it is a place, go there often. If you can't go there, focus on a picture of that place. It goes without saying that we find God in the Eucharist. Partake of it often and share in the Lord's Supper. Again, there can be a certain peace found in attending Mass and joining with others in the celebration.

Wishing you the joy of God's presence and love!