

Third Wednesday of Lent – 2/27

"For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?" (Deuteronomy 4:7-8)

Imagine immersing your hand into a bowl of water. Think about how the water totally surrounds your fingers. We could not fit anything in between our skin and the water, for there is no space that is not covered. As close as this water is to the hand it is still not as close as God is to us.

God is in our blood and in the air that we breathe. God is in our thoughts, our actions and our dreams. God blesses our emotions and directs the work that we do. God permeates our being and fashions every cell in our body. God is always aware of us and always in relationship to us. By anyone's standard that is pretty close!

Since God is so very close to us, we are very close to God as well. The irony is that too frequently we are not aware of that closeness. God may never forget us but we can go days without thinking of God. Just as we can float on the water and not feel the strength of the water that holds us up, so too God holds us in His protective love. And we can be oblivious to it.

Awareness of the presence of God calls for us to see in new ways, in ways different from our usual ones. To see laws and commandments as supportive structures rather than burdens is a different way of looking. To see our struggles as great vehicles of grace calls for eyes that can see into the present circumstances in order to see the gold amongst the dross. New eyes can see that Christ is present in all of creation and must be revered there as well as in a church or in the human spirit.

To live near to Christ means that we wonder a lot. We look at our hand in the water and be amazed that we are completely encased by this liquid. We look at a bird and see not just the bird but the Creator peering back at us. We look at a tree and see not just a tree but a column of sun energy and water, and we know that God is in the tree.

Being close to God is not difficult, but knowing that we are close to God calls us to be great observers of the world around and within us.

Questions for Reflection

- 1. How do I experience the nearness of God?*
- 2. How might I become more aware of God's presence? What could I do differently today?*

Prayer: God, You are all around me and within me. May I always be conscious of Your closeness. Amen.