

## Being Present to God and Life

Shortly after his conversion, St. Augustine penned these immortal words: “Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things that you created. You were with me, but I was not with you.” (Confessions 10:27)

Augustine had been searching for love and God. Eventually he found them in the most unexpected of all places, inside of himself. As you might know Augustine was something of a playboy and indeed he was “looking for love in all the wrong places”. He discovered that God and love had been inside of him all along. “My heart is restless until it rests in you”

**The secret to prayer is not to try to make God present, but to make ourselves present to God.**

There's a lesson here: we don't pray to make God present to us. God is already present, always present everywhere. We pray to make ourselves present to God. According to an author I read this week, God is no more present in church than in a bar, but we generally are more present to God in church than we are in a bar. **The problem of presence is not with God, but with us.**

Think in terms of the Gospel we hear today. Mark writes, “so he was not able to perform any mighty deeds there...He was amazed at their lack of faith.’ Was Jesus any less mighty in his own home town than he was last week in raising Jarius’ daughter or the women who had suffered bleeding for 12 years? The answer is no! **So what’s the problem?**

**The problem is** that the people who lived with him, who grew up with him, who probably said they changed his diapers, could not go there with him. It was their limited abilities that did not allow for the miracle to take place.

The women who had hemorrhaged for 12 years, not only believed he could heal her, but believed Jesus to be so powerful, she knew, understood and believed that if, according to Fr. Boyle (In last Sunday’s homily), if she but touched something Jesus touched, the hem of his garment, that she would be made whole. She knew there was no limit to what Jesus was able to do. Not only did she receive healing, Jesus said, “**your faith has saved you.**”

The same was true, with the synagogue official named Jarius. “Come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live.” Jesus put out all who had closed minds, who would limit the power of God, and took in only those who could believe. Peter, James. John, mom and dad. The faith of the mustard seed, a Gospel passage we heard just a couple week ago, brought about life and resurrection. She is alive, give her something to eat!

You see the grace of God abound everywhere! It is not here in one moment and not in another. St. Thomas Aquinas said, “Grace—Grace all is Grace”

It is the heart of our Sacraments. Grace is freely given, but you and I must be open to the grace for it to be effective.

I cannot force you to get married, you must freely enter into marriage for the grace to be effective.

You must be contrite and sorrowful, for the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession to have an effect. If you are not contrite, no forgiveness can take place.

It is also true of the Eucharist. The church teaches through the scriptures and her theology. “that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.” It is one of our deepest held truth. And yet we are told by many, they cannot believe in true presence of the Eucharist. Who is limiting the power of God?

The power of God is evident, the power of God is eternally present, and God is as good as his word. But we limit his power by our unbelief.

Sadly, too often we are not present to the beauty, to love, and to grace that brims within the ordinary moments of our lives. Bounty is there, but we aren't. Because of restlessness, tiredness, distraction, anger, obsession, haste, whatever, too often we are not enough inside of our ourselves to appreciate what the moments of our own lives hold.

We think of our lives as impoverished, dull, small, not worth God full attention, but, as with prayer, the fault of non-awareness and small faith is on our side.

Our lives come laden with richness, but we aren't sufficiently present to what is there.

Faith has been the theme these last few weeks during our Sunday Liturgy.

Mk 4: Faith is like the mustard seed

Mk 4: The boat rocked by the storm: [“Do you not have faith?”](#)

Mk 5: Jarius the synagogue official and the women suffering for 12 years. Faith raises up and heal, bring life and wholeness.

Mk 6: [“So he was not able to perform any mighty deeds...He was amazed at their lack of Faith.”](#)

Pick ONE! God grace is at work. Let it work in you!

Amen!