



There were two six-year-old brothers who were twins. They were always in trouble with the parents for breaking things, with the neighbors for knocking over their flowers, and with their teachers for talking in school. One day their mother, a wonderful but weary woman, found one of the boys had decided to put polka dots on her newly painted wall with magic marker. She had had enough and dragged the boy to the local church and demanded to see the priest. The priest was a very imposing man who stood six foot six and weighed 250 pounds. He decided he would try to scare the boy so he said to the boy in a loud booming voice: *Where is God?* The boy was a bit startled by his voice but he remained silent. The priest asked again, in an even louder voice, *Where is Go?* The boy was now afraid. The third time he asked the question in an even louder voice, the boy was so afraid that he ran out of church to his house, went upstairs and found his twin brother. He said to his brother, *We are really in trouble now: God is missing and they are blaming us!*

Where is God? I remember when the former Soviet Union sent the first men into orbit in space, the two cosmonauts and avowed atheistic Communists, returned and said cynically to the world, *we did not see God up here.* However, when American astronauts Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders, who on Apollo eight were the first men to circle the moon, and to see the earth from a distance as they observed what they called the first lunar sunrise, they were moved to quote the *Book of Genesis: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

Although hundreds and hundreds of thousands of images have been painted, no living person has ever seen God face to face. Recently, an enormously popular book entitled *The Shack* was made into a movie. *The Shack* is about a man who meets God in a shack, thus the title of the movie. The movie is Christian and it shows God as Trinity, three persons who are so loving and committed to each other in love that they are three individuals who have are one in unity. In a shack, the main character, a man named Mack, meets God. He meets the deity formerly known as Papa, played as an endlessly benevolent matriarch of the universe who bakes biscuits and listens to reggae on her iPod.

Jesus is a hip looking fellow who is young and looks Mideastern. The Holy Spirit is played by an Asian woman who is thin willowy woman with an artistic twist. Certainly, these are not the classic images of God that we have seen through the centuries in Christian art, and there were a fair amount of people who were turned off by these portrayals of the Divinity. I did not agree with all the thinking in the movie, but I really did not have a problem with how God was described. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are spirits. They do not have bodies. Jesus now is with the Father and the Spirit in a resurrected body. Not only do we wonder where is God, but we also ask what does God look like and most importantly what are the characteristics of God?

As human beings, we are incapable of even beginning to grasp the mystery of God. I love this story of St. Augustine who was one of the greatest minds the world has ever known: Augustine is walking along the seashore and sees a little boy running in and out of the water as the waves lap the shore. He has a shell in his hand, and the boy keeps dipping it in and out of the ocean. Augustine says to the boy: *Little boy, what are you trying to do?* The boy says to the great saint, *I am trying to put the whole ocean in this shell.* Augustine smiles and tell the child that the ocean is far too great to fit into a little shell. The boy smiles in return and says to Augustine, *The same is true for you who is trying to understand God.*

The great gift God has given us in the He chose to come among us in the form of a man. Jesus, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, becomes fully human, like us in all things but sin. He enters so fully into humanity that he feels hunger after being in the desert, he enjoys wine at a wedding, and he weeps for a friend who has died. Finally, he so enters into humanity that he does that which is most human of all- he dies.

Jesus gives us some powerful images of God: He describes God as a father who has a prodigal son whom he joyfully welcomes home with a banquet. He describes God as a Good Shepherd who risks his life to recover one of his lost sheep. He says that God is like a mother hen who wants to put her chicks under her wings. He says that God is like a farm owner who pays his daily workers a full wage whether they work an hour or the entire day. He says the God is the bread of life and that generation after generation will feed on him.

In today's Gospel, the apostles tell Jesus *we want to see the Father.* After being with Jesus, they still do not understand. Jesus patiently says, *Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works.* Jesus, fully human and fully divine, shows us in his words and actions the Father. We come to get a true glimpse of the divine.

*Wherever there is love, there is God.* God loves us. But how do we get a sense of that love? How do we put flesh and blood on God's love? Certainly, by hearing the Word of God and by receiving His Body and Blood. But we also come to know God in the love of others. I hope you have been blessed in life to have truly been loved by at least one other person: perhaps, it was your Mom or Dad, your spouse, your children, a dear friend. No human relationship is perfect or without flaw. No human love is ever perfect;

by its nature it is limited. But in these loves, we do get a taste of the divine and see a glimpse of God himself.

In the movie *The Bodyguard*, the late Whitney Houston sang a song called the *Greatest Love of All*. Other than the love of God, I would not venture to say what is the greatest human love that a person can experience. Still, I do think anyone would argue that the love of a mother for her child, be he or she age two or fifty two, would be very strong candidate. Mothers are so very often the revealing face of God to us. I will conclude with some favorite quotes about mothers:

- *When your mother asks, 'Do you want a piece of advice?' it's a mere formality. It doesn't matter if you answer yes or no. You're going to get it anyway.*
- An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy.
- The natural state of motherhood is unselfishness. When you become a mother, you are no longer the center of your own universe. You relinquish that position to your children.
- The heart of a mother is a deep abyss at the bottom of which you will always find forgiveness.

