

Where Is God?

Like all duly indoctrinated pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic children, I return to the definitive source for answers to all questions Spiritual: The Baltimore Catechism. In this case, the answer is found in

Volume 1, Lesson 2: ON GOD AND HIS PERFECTIONS

Q. 15: Where is God?

A. God is everywhere.

Q. 16 If God is everywhere, why do we not see Him?

A. We do not see God, because He is a pure spirit and cannot be seen with bodily eyes.

Which bring us to tonight's reflection: If God is everywhere and we cannot see him, how can we get to know Him?

Before we go any farther, there are two points or clarifications I'd like to make. The first is that Faith is Belief in the Absence of Evidence. The second is that Denial is Disbelief in the Presence of Overwhelming Evidence. Let me repeat: Faith is belief in the absence of evidence. And denial is disbelief in the face of overwhelming evidence. It is up to you to decide what you accept as evidence.

I love to camp, and to visit the Cathedral of the Universe Beneath the Sky. It often baffles people that I take off alone, with some camping gear, a few dollars, and even fewer plans. I tell them that mountain camping brings me a mile-or-so closer to God. Or if I'm headed for the desert, I get to listen to Him where the silence is deafening. Sometimes I may even mention that 'awful' means 'full of awe.' Some people get it, smile, and tell me where they find God. Others are baffled, and ask why I have to go somewhere when God is everywhere. The answer is simple. It's because it's all about me. More specifically it's about my relationship, my experience of God.

In his book, *The Shack*, William Young has a clever way of leading us from experience to belief. Imagine walking along a path in the woods and finding a shack next to a small lake at the end of the path. There is a woman cooking in the kitchen. This is how Mack is introduced to God the Father. We later learn that God chose this image because it was one that Mack could accept and experience in his current state. As the story progressed, Mack found out that God is not who he thought he was...his perception changed as he experienced God.

Now, let's leave the shack and visit an empty forest in Philosophy 101. If a tree falls in this empty forest, does it make a noise? Most novices would assert that it

does; the initiated that it does not. The key to the riddle is that noise is an experience that must be perceived in order to exist in our consciousness, and then entered into our knowledge bank. And this leads into tonight's main point:

God exists just as much as that fallen tree does. The only place that God could be present is in the realm of personal perception. I.E., God cannot 'be' where He is not experienced. Returning to our look at "Faith" and "Denial" again, we can see that sometimes we need a nudge, or enticement to experience what we see or hear but do not know or understand. That is why Faith is both Gift and Choice.

God is everywhere, and I am not. In fact, there are times when my mind is in a different place than my body. But when God and I are in the same place at the same time, the result is filled with awe...not to mention the peace and joy that being Graced with His Presence brings.

Meanwhile, back in the kitchen, God the Father is baking. Mack found God in a most unexpected place. He changed as a result of this and other encounters during his visit.

I wonder if she was baking praline cookies. Now that would be divine.