

## Last Sunday after Epiphany

This week's Old Testament reading from Exodus recalls Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai after standing in the presence of God. The Gospel reading recalls the story referred to as the Transfiguration in which three of Jesus' disciples have an awesome experience in which they perceive Moses and Elijah standing beside Jesus. Both of these stories are epiphanies, the showing forth of God to God's people and the opportunity for God's people to respond. This week's epiphany experiences are dramatic and we may find ourselves believing that sort of drama is the norm for God's intervention and showing forth in life. I am convinced, however, that William Temple, former Archbishop of Canterbury, was correct when he wrote that "Either all things are revelation or nothing is." The face of God, the presence of God, is constantly before us; our perception of and response to that presence is the issue.

The divine is expressed to us in numerous ways. One such way is natural theology, that is, nature shows us the cycle of life. An oak tree sheds its leaves and acorns. The acorn, sitting on top of the ground, rots or is consumed by a squirrel. If that acorn is allowed, however, to sink into fertile ground, it is nourished and begins the process of becoming a mighty oak tree. We as people left to our own devices often wither and decay. But if we receive nourishment, if we become grounded in the fertile ground of family, church and community, we too begin to grow and develop as sacred human beings in new and enhanced ways.

God's presence also comes to us in what is referred to as revealed theology. We learn of God and God's call upon our lives in Holy Scripture, in the Holy Eucharist, and through the historical prayers and dogma and other teachings of the church that have been given to us as a part of revealed theology. We learn that God has created us and challenges us to our own form of creativity. We learn that God has redeemed us and calls us to lifestyles that manifest

the notion that all things can be healed and made new. We learn that God sustains us in ways that permits us to assist others on occasion to cope and other times overcome those things that attempt to limit us from becoming the people we perceive God calling us to be and toward which we aspire. God's presence, God's epiphanies occur through natural theology and revealed theology.

Equally important, God allows His presence to be known to us through the daily encounters in our lives. When we meet one another in the Boardroom or our bedroom, when we engage one another in the classroom or the work room, when we buy or sell the necessities and luxuries from one another, when we share coffee with a friend or give a meal to a homeless person, each of these moments, the way we initiate or the way we respond, offers, if we have the eyes to see, spiritual insights that allow us to see God and how we in fact are responding to God in that moment. Am I raising you up in those moments, am I by my attitude, acknowledging your inherent worth and dignity; am I treating you with the care and affection of a brother or sister in Christ?

Every moment in life is an opportunity for us to participate in the Divine by transforming those moments of life through love and thanksgiving. We do not have to go to a mountain to encounter the presence of God and learn God's ways; we simply have to be open and attentive to the person before us and, by so doing, experience the presence of God in that very moment.

Amen