

Christian Perspectives: Glimpses of God

By Rev. Stephanie Pellow

A number of my Christian friends of different denominational traditions speak about always having a sense of God, most often as Jesus or the Holy Spirit, just behind their left shoulder almost all the time.

I think that would be wonderfully reassuring, but it is not always my experience.

It seems God not only gives us a variety of gifts, but gives them in different ways.

My experience may not be exactly like yours or person next to you either.

Sometimes I feel close to God, other times it is more a case of 'God is in his heaven, all's right with the world,' that providential sense that no matter how much sin and sadness abound, joy and assurance in the creative power of God abound even more.

Sometimes it is helpful to ask yourself this question, 'When did I feel especially close to Christ this week?' That question nudges me to think about 'when?' but also 'why?' and 'how?' I felt close to Christ.

It is not always a sense of the nearness of the divine. Sometimes that special time is when I believe I am serving in the way in which Christ served, when I am forgiving in the way Christ forgives, when I am loving another in the way Christ loved or when I welcome others into my life as Christ welcomed and accepted me.

I feel close to Christ in those moments when I am doing what he has asked me to do, when I am as Christ-like as I can be by the grace of God at work in me.

The value in asking the question, 'When did I feel especially close to Christ this week?' lies in training ourselves to be aware of those special moments so that we can recognize them more readily as time goes on. Requiring ourselves to remember those moments, to write down an account of them or share them with another has the ability to buoy us up in our journey through each week.

Our tasks may seem mundane or thankless at times but take on new meaning when we see them as working in tandem with Christ.

I invite you to take a brief moment to look back over the past week. Was there a time when you felt particularly close to Christ? Can you recreate that incident in your imagination and sense again how you were feeling? Was there a sense of joy or satisfaction in the thought?

Our life of faith is not meant to be a drudge. It is an act of loving response to an understanding that we have first been loved by a gracious God. These moments of connection are not often intense mountain top experiences, but rather fleeting glimpses of the God we worship and whose path we follow.

They can be signposts along the way, directing us and indicating that we are on the right route. We all need some indication of how well we are doing as we learn a new job, or take on committee work or practice a new skill.

Our spiritual life is similar. The spiritual practices of prayer, scripture reading, meditation and group worship help us to be open to the presence of the divine around us.

Paying attention to each other and our work, family and recreational environments also opens us to perceive the divine presence in our lives.

I invite you to hold this question in your mind over the next couple of weeks as we approach the Easter celebrations: ?When did I feel closest to Christ this week??