

Sr. Benedict has the unenviable task of asking people to move from their seats at Vespers if they are in the camera's line of sight. She had to do so yesterday when we were visited by a retired professor of business studies and his son-in-law. There is a notice at the end of each line of seats saying « Row not in use » which the Professor interpreted as, if not in use this means they are available, nobody else is using them – the wonders of the English language, or indeed any language, especially when it comes to talking about God and even more so when an extremely intelligent person is allowed their say. God is not accessible to us as a construct of the mind or, rather the God we know with the mind is not God. This is very hard for us to understand, to get to grips with, to surrender to - because the mind, so often dominated by the left rather than the right hemisphere, is all we think we have to make sense of God but God makes sense to us only through love and that only makes sense to us through the love we bear for one another including the love of self which can only be built by the love others have for us, hopefully parents and family first and later all those other human relationships which we can then learn to build and enjoy as we go through life. The whole point of the incarnation is that we learn to see God through the medium of the flesh, of one another, of the world. Christ is the vehicle or sacrament, for this understanding of God,

*«to have seen me is to have seen the Father »*

as Jesus says to Philip later in the gospel, and later still he will breathe his spirit on his disciples so that they will continue to live this relationship to the Father through the power or grace of the Holy Spirit. Belief in Jesus as the way to God is not a matter of intellectual assent– something that we think into being -but of surrender to what Jesus has done for us in his total self-giving to the Father, and, even less is it an understanding of what it means for God to be recognised as a trinity, three persons in one God. It's not something we are being called to understand but a description of how the first disciples, and every Christian since, experience God – by surrendering ourselves to Jesus – an act of love – we find ourselves loved. If we don't, then something is not happening, we may have to look elsewhere. When Adam Nicholson builds his three pools on the seashore opposite Mull in NW Scotland he finds that it's only in the pool built lowest down on the shore with one side and it's floor left entirely natural that life can flourish – only for most of the time this flourishing takes place out of sight for the tides cover the pool for most of the day and night. In this sense it's an act of faith that the sea will look after its own, that the Holy Spirit will be at work even when we cannot know this in an intellectual sense for most of the time. But we can trust that this is so if love is present – the Community Cafe doesn't have to be explicitly Christian in the work it does but where there is Charity there is God. There may be times when you look at your fellow human beings and wonder how on earth could God be present in them. there were times when Jesus felt that too but he doesn't give up on them, as he doesn't give up on us, and nor are we to give up on one another. This is the task and joy of community life, of Trinitarian Life, of being Church.

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