



Jesus said to her,
“I am the resurrection
and the life. Whoever
believes in me,
though he die, yet
shall he live,

John 11:25

Since the dawn of time, human beings have been asking the question: *where is God?* All the greatest minds that have ever lived, all the brilliant philosophers of the ages, and the great religions of the world have sought to address this question. I heard of a religious education teacher who raised this question to her first-grade students. She asked, *Boys and girls, where do we find God.* Like any group of first graders, every hand was waving, saying aloud *I know, I know.* So, the teacher pointed to Susan, and she responded, *God is in heaven.* The teacher said, *very good, that is correct.* Another child named Mary raised her hands and said that *God is our hearts.* Again, the teacher congratulated the young girl on her correct answer. Another child, a boy named Robert from a large family of seven children, was frantically seeking the teacher’s attention with his waving hand. She said, *Okay, Robert, where do we find God.* He responded, *God is in my bathroom.* Naturally, all the children giggled and laughed, and the perplexed teacher said, *Robert, why would you say that?* He answered, *every morning my Dad stands outside the door of our bathroom and says, God, will you please get out of that bathroom.*

On a more serious note, I recall when the first Russian cosmonauts went into outer space, when they returned to earth, they cynically told the reporters, *we did not see God.* They were avowed atheists. Yet, when the American crew of Apollo Eight, who were the first human beings ever to circle the earth in December of 1968, they were moved on a Christmas Eve to recite from 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. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.* These men could not look at the glorious creation they were seeing and not see the handiwork of God the Creator.

You and have had similar moments in our lives. When you were filled with wonder when you first feel in love with your future spouse, when you looked at your newborn child in

his/her first moments, when you saw the sun in all its glory setting over the ocean, and even, when you wept upon the first moments of realizing someone you loved to the core of your being had died, you could only say, *Oh, my God.*

Where is God is a haunting question. I have been studying theology and religion for almost five decades. I have had wonderful teachers and read many fine books about questions of God. Still, the older I get, the more I find myself going back to the catechism of my youth, popularly known to previous generations as *The Baltimore Catechism*, for answers to the most profound questions of life.

Two of the questions and responses that I learned when I was in the first grade at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Brooklyn were in the catechism. I am sure that those of you who would be willing to admit that you are on the other side of sixty, may well be familiar with these two questions and the responses to them:

Q. *Why did God make you?*

A. *God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven.*

Q. *Where is God?*

A. *God is everywhere.*

No words could be clearer, nor could any word be more mysterious. God made us for one reason: to share life with him forever and God is everywhere. We all that tendency to say that *God is up there* and point to the sky. We smile and say when *I get up there I am going to ask him some questions.* It is only natural to think of heaven as great place in the sky with angel sitting on clouds and playing harps.

Where is God, and for all of us who have lost loved one, where are our beloved deceased. What are they doing right now? Every part of losing someone is painful, a pain that is not one just of the heart and body, but even an ache in our souls. Watching our loved one die, going to funeral home, picking clothes for them to wear in the casket, writing the obituary, seeing them for the first time in the funeral home, the last farewell called for by the undertaker, the funeral mass, all carry sadness. I think for me the most difficult moment was when the day was over after my Mom's funeral, and I was now alone, and wondered where is she?

Despite the many questions that can even border on doubt, I believe in Jesus Christ and his promise of eternal life. Jesus promised us: *I will not leave you orphans. I go and prepare a place for you.* I trust in him and his promise *that whoever believes in him will never die but have eternal life.* I trust in his mercy for those I loved and for myself that God is loving father who forgives us our sins and welcome us home. I have found comfort in the words that Robert Kennedy pondered from the ancient Greeks after the death of his brother John: *In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.* Time and the grace of God are the healers of grief.

God is everywhere. Our beloved deceased are now with God. I believe God is as close to you and me as our breath and our next heartbeat. And if our beloved deceased are

with God, and they are, then they are as close to you as your breath. They are with you. I believe you not that not just by faith but because you have been talking to them and you have heard them whisper to you. There have been moments when they gently nudged you and you felt their presence.

We believe that God is present here in the Holy Eucharist. He told us at the Last Supper *This is my body, this is my blood. He is here. They are here. They are with us and loving us always.*

Celtic spirituality has a beautiful term called a *thin space*: there are places and times where we are conscious that God and all those who are with God are very close to us. My brothers and sisters, we will live in a world of thin spaces.