

**June 17, 2018**

**11th Sunday in Ordinary Tome**

**There is one thing I ask, there is one thing I seek:  
to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life**

*Living in the House of the Lord is being touched and caressed by God*

We may not realize it, but we have all been touched and caressed by God. And yet, even though we bear that mark of that touch, there is still a spiritual loneliness in us, an ache that persists in the deepest part of our being. How does this come together in us? Oblate Fr. Ronald Rolheizer offers this reflection.

"We are lonely in different ways: we always feel some distance from others, some restlessness that cannot be alleviated, a kind of nostalgia for a home we can never quite find. There is loneliness, a yearning that never quite gives us rest. We are in the words of Toni Morrison, soul-chained to deep things outside of ourselves.

"This dis-ease lies at the center of our experience, not at its edges. We are not restful persons who sometimes get restless; serene persons who sometimes experience disquiet; or fulfilled persons who sometimes get frustrated. Rather we are restless beings who sometimes find serenity, and dissatisfied men and women who sometimes find satisfaction.

"Among all of these yearnings, one is deeper than all the rest and beneath everything else. It is for spiritual completion, for someone who meets us in the depths of our souls, someone from whom we don't have to hide what is truest inside of us, someone who understands and honors all that is most precious to us.

"Scripture and the mystics express this best. From the Song of Songs (3,1-4):

*On my bed at night I sought my beloved.*

*I sought but could not find him.*

*So I got up and went through the city;*

*in the streets and on the squares, seeking my beloved.*

*I sought but could not find her!*

*I came upon the watchmen on their rounds in the city:*

*"Have you seen my beloved?"*

*Barely had I passed them when I found my beloved and would not let him go,  
until I had brought her to my mother's house."*

Each of us, beyond what we can name, has a dark memory of once having been touched and caressed by hands far gentler than our own. The old myths tell it best, that before we were born, God kissed our souls, and we go through life always remembering, in some some dark way, that kiss and measuring everything else in relation to it and its original purity, tenderness, and sweetness.

This unconscious memory of once having been touched and caressed by God creates the deepest place inside where we hold what is most sacred to us. This is the place that we most guard from others, even as it is the place that we would most like someone to come into with that same purity, tenderness, and truth that the original caress of God formed in the first place."

This is just such a story. I bought something on-line recently, something I don't do very often. I called to check on the status of my order. The following is a transcript of our messages:

- † On June 7th, I wrote, "*What is the status of my order placed June 6, '18?*"
- † On June 7th, a Customer Service Manager wrote, "*I have one!!!!!! It will ship out tomorrow UPS Ground.*"
- † On June 8th, I wrote, "*Well, thank you very kindly. Flowers and candy to you.*"
- † On June 8th, she wrote, "*Hahah you are welcome. FYI: I love sunflowers and dark chocolate.*"
- † On June 14th, i wrote, "*The shipment arrived today. Thanks. I don't have any dark chocolate, but hope this quote from a Vietnamese Buddhist, Thich Nhat Hanh will do: 'Invite fear & pain into our consciousness and care for them every day. Be grateful for them. They turn the compost of our conscious minds into flowers & vegetables'.*"
- † On June 14th, she wrote, "*First of all... So glad your package arrived! Secondly, thank you for sharing such amazing words; and out of compost the beautiful sunflower grows!*" And then she added: -- "*Stay in touch!*"

"*Stay in touch!*" Can you imagine, receiving a request like that - from a Customer Service Department manager - on-line! I don't know who she is or where she is. "*Stay in touch?*" This has never happened to me before.

It occurs to me that maybe my emails brought to mind in her an unconscious memory of once having been touched and caressed by God, which created the deepest place inside where she holds what is most sacred to her - this place that she most guards from others, even as it is the place that she would most like someone to come in to with that same purity, tenderness, and truth that the original caress of God formed her in the first place.

Feeling kissed and caressed by God can come in the most unusual times and in the most unusual ways. So whenever we feel that something is missing in our lives - that there has to be something more to life than this right now -- that's wonderful! We are being given a free reminder that there is something waiting for us that is far more beautiful and loving than whatever is in front of us at the time. It's that beautiful dark deep memory of long ago of having been kissed and caressed by God that is coming through, reminding us that there is a lot more of that yet to come.

Shhhh! Listen! Do you hear that? . . . That is God telling us to "*STAY IN TOUCH!*"