

**SAID ED October 14, 2007**

Mystery. We are surrounded with it, enfolded in its arms and hovered over by its wings. Yet, what is mystery? As I am fond of saying to couples on their wedding day, "Mystery is a code word for 'The presence of God'." By definition mystery cannot be understood. It lies beyond the scope of our human intellect. In the face of a mystery, we can only celebrate and savor it.

This week as we celebrate Respect Life Month, I want to savor the power of mystery with you. It seems most fitting to reflect on "Mystery" as the Catholic community ponders the wonder and sacredness of life. We believe that all life from "the womb to the tomb" is a gift from God and as such is sacred, warranting our respect and safe guarding. This respect and safe guarding flow from the Mystery which is our God as revealed in Jesus the Christ.

In "My Grandfather's Blessings," Rachel Naomi Remen writes: "We have not been raised to cultivate a sense of Mystery. We may even see the unknown as an insult to our competence, a personal failing. Seen this way, the unknown becomes a challenge to action. But Mystery does not require action; Mystery requires our attention. Mystery requires that we listen and become open. When we meet with the unknown in this way, we can be touched by a wisdom that can transform our lives."

Cecil Collins wrote: "There is one thing that we are certain about and that is that we are surrounded by a profound mystery. And in some strange way we are asked to participate in this mystery and to collaborate with it." These words resonate with my own convictions about the Mystery that is our God who loves us unconditionally and not from afar.

Lawrence Kushner poetically writes in "Honey from the Rock" that "religion is a more or less organized way of remembering that every Mystery points to a high reality. A reality overarching and infusing this world with splendor. One pulsing through its veins. Unnoticed and unnamed. Of the nameless One. A holiness that fills even our everyday illusions with spiritual meaning."

How blessed are we who inherit the wonderful spiritual tradition of our church. This Mystery that is God beckons us ever near and ever farther into the Love that we know is God. Albert Einstein once said: "One cannot but be in awe when contemplating the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery each day. Never lose a holy curiosity."

Happy contemplating this week!

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