

WHERE IS GOD?

Even after death, Mother Teresa of Calcutta commands the interest of the world. What has made this woman “tick” continues to be a subject of curiosity for the mass media. That the press would have such an interest in this simple woman who did great things is a tribute to her and praise to the God that she served.

The mass media has relished in informing the world that Mother Teresa appears to have doubted the existence of God. They come to this conclusion from a newly-released book entitled Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light. In letters quoted there, she writes of the reality of darkness and coldness and emptiness being so great that nothing touches her soul. She longed for God “with all power of my soul – and yet between us there is terrible separation.” Mother Teresa referred to Jesus as “the absent one.”

One columnist said in ridicule, “That’s religion for you. Even God’s absence proves God’s existence.” Another would claim that these “scrawled, desperate” thoughts of Mother Teresa speak volumes about the fallacy of religious faith. According to such columnists, it would seem that this great humanitarian, considered for sainthood by the Church, was not even convinced that there is a God!

Most columnists and editors of religion sections in the media do not understand religion, - any expression of religion. Yet, they presume to write about something that they do not comprehend. That would never do in the area of sports. However, there are exceptions. These rightly remind their readers that even Jesus felt abandoned by the Father when hanging on the cross. What is significant is that Mother Teresa never wavered from what God called her to do, even when she felt abandoned by God. Her despair, of sorts, is a normal expression of the human condition and entirely in keeping with the Scriptures themselves, a few columnists explain. And, they are correct.

The fact of the matter is that Mother Teresa is not the only hero or heroine in the history of the Church to have felt that God had abandoned her. A number of saints would have had the same experience. It is not a matter of not believing in God but, rather, a search to find the God in whom one believes. Such individuals yearn to be possessed by the Almighty and to experience that possession. However, loving God would be too easy, if that were to be the case. Normally, it is not, - perhaps, for that reason.

Our earthly Pilgrimage of Faith is a search for God. Being human beings, we would like to have a bodily experience of his presence. When or whether or not we do is entirely up to the Divine Will. God is a spiritual being and tends to do things in a way different from ours. So, we do not believe because we have “found” the Lord of our soul. We believe because we know that He can be found.

The One who felt abandoned on the cross taught us that God is. The one who felt abandoned while serving the poorest of the poor showed us the way to search for Him. Theirs was the trusting Faith into which our loving God has invited us all.

The majority of us never do come to have a corporeal sense of the Lord’s presence in our lives. However, if we look hard enough, we can see his footprints along side of ours. Mother Teresa did. At the same time, she longed to hold his hand.