

## **Traveling Companion - Where is God?**

Fr. Michael Tracey

I stood at the back of church on Saturday evening prior to evening Mass. I greeted people as they entered to celebrate Mass.

As I stood there, a group of people, obvious strangers, entered. One man, two women and a little girl introduced themselves. They were visitors. They just wanted to stop by and see the progress we had made in restoring the church to its original beauty.

The little girl caught my eye. She was about three years old and full of chatter around the adults she came with. They motioned to her to be quiet, telling her that this was "God's house." Finally, she got the courage to approach me. She asked, "Is this God's house?" I told her it was. Then she asked, "Where does God live here?" I pointed to the sanctuary area and the tabernacle and told her, "There." "Does he have a room?" she asked. "Yes!" I replied. Obviously, seeing that she did not see God in that area, she pressed the issue and asked, "Do you think he might be asleep now?" I simply had to respond by saying, "Maybe, he is taking a nap." She seemed satisfied and ended her questioning. Minutes later, the group left.

Some weeks ago, I was performing my usual morning duty of traffic cop at Holy Trinity School, ushering the children out of cars and making sure that traffic flowed quickly and smoothly. Later that day, a mother came to me and shared an incident that happened to her child that morning. It seemed I ushered her child out of the car and helped her with her school bag but, in the rush, forgot to get the child's lunch. Later that child called her mother and said, "God made me forget my lunch this morning." Obviously, the mother brought the lunch to her later.

Recently, I had visited a parish in San Jose, California to preach about Hurricane Katrina and its impact on our community and to invite the people to help us. The following Sunday, I was back in my parish. A little boy attended Mass with his mother. During the Mass, he turned to his mother and said, "God is back from vacation."

Prior to Christmas, I attended Holy Trinity Elementary School Christmas Program. Children from various grades presented the Christmas story in song and story. Parents captured their budding songsters on digital cameras and camcorders. They wanted memories to replay and pass on to grandparents, reminding them how wonderful their fledgling entertainers were.

In the midst of the excitement, I wondered how many noticed another spectacular show that went on. Most people were concentrating on center stage and the main act. I was blessed to have a prime seat to view a most interesting and heart-warming performance.

Two little girls, probably aged two years old, dressed in their Christmas finery, put on their own Christmas show. They danced, clapped, hugged and mimicked for anyone who would notice. On occasion, they were joined by a slightly younger girl, still a little wobbly on her feet. Together, the three of them, checked each other out, discovered each other and found out that, if you could have an audience, you might be a star one day.

While the strains of the familiar Christmas songs reached my ears, my eyes feasted on the spontaneity, delight, enthusiasm, and sheer joy of the three little girls. I couldn't help but realize that, while we were singing about a world celebrating the arrival of a Christ Child, we were discovering a God who was living, loving, breathing, performing and celebrating in a trinity of three little girls.

So, when I find myself in the midst of a muddling day, filled with chaos and crisis, I can always be surprised and assured that there will be an answer to my prayer, "Where is God?"