

Living Tabernacles

I have observed, especially within myself, and it seems to be the case that there is a change of face, or perhaps more appropriately worded as an adaptation of behavior, whenever one stands before the altar and the tabernacle, as opposed to any other time.

Movements become slower and more purposeful, and one's attitude becomes more present, and meditative. Perhaps this is because we are more actively and consciously aware of our presence before God. I think we become more cognizant of God before the altar than we do at any other time. Perhaps this is because the symbolism and iconography leads our minds, our consciousness, into that plain of thought, but beyond this I can only guess.

This should not be the case. I mean, granted, we want to keep an air of reverence, respect, and admiration before God, but why should the altar be the only place that this takes place?

Everything that we say, all that we do, should be done so while taking into account that we are as much before the presence of God when we stand before the altar, as we are now, and where ever else we choose to be. The altar, and the tabernacle therein, is not the only resting place of the Holy Trinity.

"Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds." (Psalm 148.7-10)

All of creation points to, and contains the glory of God. Our present moment is contained within the realm of all of eternity. Like a glass of water submerged beneath the sea, it contains the water in as much as it is surrounded by it, so it is with us and all of creation as it concerns the presence of God. God is within us, within all things around us, as much as he surrounds all of creation, immersed in his love. If we consider this, then all that we do, and all that we say, is done so before the very presence of God himself. So how should our reverence to God, to the immanence of God, to the very presence of God, be any different than that which we do before the altar?

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you..." (1 Cor. 6.19)

We are the living, breathing tabernacles of the created. Created in the image of its creator, we are as much the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, and the body of Christ, as is the tabernacle at the altar. By the power and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us, as living tabernacles, as containers of God's love, every one of us has the potential to be like that of Christ Jesus.

Our reverence here, now, in front of the altar should be no different than that which we do then, where ever else we may find ourselves. We are all living tabernacles amidst the altar of God's creation.