

THREE LITTLE SIGNS FROM GOD

I have invited you to look for signs from God. Did you find any? Are you still searching? Open your eyes. Pay attention to what is happening around you. Be curious! Be child-like! You may see a little sign just for you. God is always seeking your attention. Here are three little signs of God:

1. LITTLE GIRL EMBRACING JESUS. This was for me one of the most inspiring moments of our Christmas liturgies. Yes, the music was heavenly (Thanks Music Ministry). Yes, the Christmas decorations in the Sanctuary were spectacular (Thanks Altar Guild). Many of you attending the Children Mass on Christmas Eve noticed another very special moment. In his homily, Fr. Ben had invited the children to sit at the foot of the sanctuary and watch him warm up Baby Jesus (poor baby was naked). First, Fr. Ben put a wool hat "JOY" on Baby Jesus' head. Then, he covered Jesus with a sweater "PRAYER". Yes, Jesus is warmed up by our JOY and our Prayers! Finally, he covered the entire baby Jesus in a blanket "LOVE". Jesus always needs our Love. At that very moment, a little girl sitting in front got up and came to EMBRACE LITTLE JESUS! What a beautiful image of what Christmas is all about: LOVE! JESUS Himself is LOVE. HE IS GOD. GOD IS LOVE. Thanks Fr. Ben for an inspirational homily and thanks to one of our little children to show such a spontaneous response to an invitation to love Jesus!

2. NAOMI'S SMILE. Let us keep praying for the healing of Naomi. Her classmates at St Peter's School and her teachers have been praying the Rosary regularly. In our parish, we have already had several Masses offered for her healing. We have distributed a special prayer card asking for the intercession of Father Martin (a first miracle!). Naomi is just 6-year old. For over one full year, she has been battling a severe brain tumor with much courage. She has kept going to school. Only in the last few weeks, she had to remain at home. She is no longer able to walk. She rests most of the time, keeping her eyes closed. Her mother shows much courage and faith. Two days after Christmas, Naomi received her FIRST COMMUNION. Her teachers had prepared her for this great sacrament. As I told Naomi THE BODY OF CHRIST and as she received Jesus for the first time ever, SHE SMILED! A few moments earlier, Naomi had kept her eyes closed. She had appeared to be very

tired. To see her eyes open and to see her smile was a special moment for all her family. We all prayed that God through the Eucharist would give not only spiritual but also physical strength to Naomi. Before I left, we all prayed for Naomi to be able to receive the Eucharist many more times! We all prayed for a MIRACLE!

3. BROTHER LAWRENCE OF THE RESURRECTION. You may recall my reflection on a recent book "The Mindful Catholic" by Dr. Gregory Bottaro. The book's subtitle " FINDING GOD ONE MOMENT AT A TIME" is an encouragement to focus on the PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE PRESENT MOMENT. This reminded me of Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, who lived 400 years ago, and is famous for his much repeated advice "to practice the presence of God". I had thoroughly enjoyed reading Brother Lawrence's "THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD" ten years ago. This Christmas, I went back to that little book and it has been for me "A SIGN OF GOD". Yes, we can all find the presence of God at any moment of our lives: since our baptism, the triune God, Father Son Holy Spirit, is dwelling within us. We may not be able to feel that presence throughout an entire day as Brother Lawrence, but we may learn to do so for a few moments every day, one moment at a time.

I hope that the above examples may be of some help to you in discovering signs from God. These do not have to be major signs. God speaks to us through whispers and through simple, child-like messages. We just have to keep our EYES OPEN. Through such signs, God helps us to come closer to HIM gradually and do HIS WILL not ours! As we are still at the beginning of the New Year, attempting to define and implement our New Year Resolutions, let us pray to God together what I refer to as the STRETCH-ME prayer:

*"HEAVENLY FATHER, help me to go out of my comfort zone today and STRETCH me gently in the RIGHT PATH so that I can do YOUR WILL and not my will.
HEAVENLY FATHER, help me to bear your WHISPERS in my heart and OBEY your commands.
HEAVENLY FATHER, help me to LOVE YOU and my NEIGHBOR. Help me to SURRENDER TO YOU TOTALLY!"*

One in Christ,
Father Alain