

## **Hidden in God**

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

August 4, 2019

Fr. Tony Davis

Spirituality is essential for our lives. Sadly, so many of us never reach very deep into our souls. Our spiritualities, if we have one or even want one, are often quite shallow and external. Our society doesn't help matters, either. Like in today's Gospel, most of us would rather accumulate more and more material goods and build bigger and bigger barns to store them. Yet, as Jesus warns us, that isn't the purpose of life. All of our material goods can be taken away from us in an instant; "You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you." Jesus concludes, "Thus will it be for all those who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God."

The Trappist monk Thomas Merton believed that the riches that matter to God are actually not visible to the world at all. That is because they are hidden within us. True spirituality is an inward journey which goes much deeper than surface level politics or religion. St. Paul in our Second Reading from Colossians says it so perfectly: "For you have died with Christ, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." That is the foundation of true spirituality: a life hidden with Christ in God. It is no wonder that this man lived for many years in a monastery which was literally hidden from the world.

In his book *No Man Is An Island*, Merton explains, "A person is a person insofar as he has a secret and is a solitude of his own that cannot be communicated to anyone else. If I love a person, I will love that which most makes him a person: the secrecy, the hiddenness, the solitude of his own individual being, which God alone can penetrate and understand. A

love that breaks into the spiritual privacy of another in order to lay open all his secrets and besiege his solitude with importunity does not love him: it seeks to destroy what is best in him, and what is most intimately his.” (*No Man is an Island*, 244-5)

Each one of us has something planted within us by God that only we can find. It cannot be communicated to another person. No pope, bishop, priest, brother, or sister can find it for you, nor should they! Ministers are supposed to help you do your work, not do your work for you. Only you and God have the right to go into that spiritual secrecy, hiddenness, privacy, and solitude that is within you. If we truly love others, we will respect these boundaries and reach the point where we finally stop and do not interfere with God’s presence in their soul.

*Spirituality is about going into the hidden place within our souls that only we can go.*

How often do I go to that place within me where I am hidden with Christ in God?

The invitation is there for each one of us to go within ourselves and explore these depths. It is our choice. If we do decide to go within, what will each one of us find there? What will our spirituality look like? I don’t know...that is for you to find out.