

The little girl was in art class at school. The teacher comes by to observe her work. "What are you drawing?" she asked. "God" was the reply of the student. The teacher tried to not be discouraging, but said, "No one knows what God looks like," The little girl replied, "They will when I get finished with this drawing."

How do you picture God? I suspect all of us have that picture somewhere in our minds. There was a time when I pictured God as this old man up in the clouds with a pad and pencil making check marks of what I did right and what I did wrong. Nor a good image. Maybe God comes to your mind when you see a brilliant fall sunset from the Blue Hill Overlook at the top of Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park. Maybe the performance of a great piece of music, or some work of art causes you to image God. All of these are symbols that cannot really define God for any of us. The second of the Ten Commandments orders us not to make a "graven image" of God. God is too holy, too high and lifted up to be contained in any image we might make.

God calls Moses from the burning bush. God says, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Issac and the God of Jacob. At this, Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God." Even in the Temple in Jerusalem on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies – the room in the temple where the presence of God dwelt, there was a gold chain around the leg of the High Priest. If something happened to him, the people would pull him out. The average person could not live in that close presence of God. I John in the New Testament reminds us that no one has seen God.

In the creation story in Genesis, humans are created in the image of God. But we don't really think of God's image in anthropomorphic terms- we don't think of God with hands and eyes, a God who is hungry or afraid. I think of being created in God's image as having to do with character, the ability to have a relationship with God and creation – including other human beings. It is not a physical image.

But there are times when our hearts are troubled and afraid. The mere saying of "It's okay, don't be afraid" offered here by Jesus are no more comforting that words offered by a child troubled and afraid. The words are not important. What is important is the presence of Jesus and the presence of parents.

Thomas asks the good question. "How can I know the way? How can I know to do faith?" Probably the best response of Thomas is "Show me and I will be satisfied." Jesus responds that Thomas has seen the Father in the words and actions of himself. Some want to use this to say Jesus is God. I don't follow that line of reasoning. The Bible is not all that helpful. There are times when Jesus seems to equate himself with God. Other times, like in his conversation with the young ruler, he refuses – "Why call me Good, no one is good but God." To me the passage assures us that we as human, like Jesus, can trust in God. We, like Jesus, can do the will of God.

I am aware that there are Christians who quote this passage and say that it literally means that "Jesus is the only way, the only truth, the only life." Others of us use those words to mean that in our tradition of religious thought, we see Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life. But we would not use those words to exclude other religious traditions from the presence of God. When I use those word, I believe that the way of Jesus – the way of loving service, of inclusive love, of embracing others as the children of God is a basic way that all of us, of whatever religious persuasion, come to God. It is the way we serve God. When we see unmerited forgiveness, loving service in others, inclusive love and care for others, - like Thomas had seen in Jesus, we are seeing the presence of God.

The young boy decided to go look for God. He thought that it would be a long journey, so he got his backpack, and put in all the twinkies he had in it along with plenty of drinks. He walked out the front door to began his journey. After a bit of walking, he came to a park. He noticed this old woman, sitting on a bench watching the pigeons. He went over and sat down by her and she smiled at him.

He noticed she looked hungry, so he gave her one of his twinkies. She smiled the most beautiful smile at him. He liked her, so he stayed awhile. He offered her a drink, and again, she smiled the most beautiful smile. He stayed the afternoon. There wasn't a lot of talking, sharing of twinkies, drinks and smiles. It was getting late, so he gave her some more of his twinkies before he left for home.

Again, she smiled the most beautiful smile. When he got home, his mother asked, "Well, did you find God? The boy

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replied, "Yes, I found God." Before his mother could ask any questions the boy added, "And she has the most beautiful smile." When the old woman got home, her daughter asked her where she had been doing all day. She answered that she had found God. And before the daughter could ask any questions, the old woman said, "And God is a lot younger that I thought he would be."