

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
November 16, 1935.

The Presence of God.

Our catechism asks: Where is God? And the answer is, God is everywhere. Does God see us? God sees us and watches over us. Thus in light of day, or dark of night, in the secrecy of our own rooms, wherever we may be, God is there--knows our thoughts, sees our actions, hears our conversation.

Review what occurred at the Last Supper: "This is My Body"; "This is My Blood"; "Do this in commemoration of Me"--priests given power to consecrate, to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood. And Christ is present in the tabernacle, where all can visit Him. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament! Christ placed in the monstrance for all to see in a veiled and dark manner--He Whom we all hope one day to see face to face!

The body of Christ is even closer to us at one other time--in the Mass when He is present on the altar not encased in the glass of the monstrance. From the Consecration until the Communion the Body and Blood of Christ lie on the altar under the appearance of bread and wine.

And, finally, the closest possible presence--Holy Communion--when Christ is really present within us.

What marvellous privileges! What corresponding responsibilities! We believe, but do we act as if we believe?

The unbaptized infidel or pagan, with no knowledge of the truth, may want to do everything possible to be united with his Maker hereafter. Such a one might be said to have Baptism of Desire, and such dispositions would be considered by God sufficient for the salvation of that man's soul.

And the baptized non-Catholic, he doesn't accept the truths that we believe in. But he cannot be condemned for that. He was brought up in his own belief. He may not have had opportunity to believe otherwise. But let us say that he obeys the Ten Commandments, prays, manifests love of God, especially through kindness and regard for his neighbor. He, too, may merit salvation.

Take the Catholic, far removed from the luxuries of his religion, in the dense regions of South America or Africa. No church or priest at hand; no opportunity of ever seeing either. He may be faithful to prayer, renew his belief in the truths he learned at his mother's knee, frequently make acts of perfect contrition, try his best to lead a righteous life. Such a one, too, would win Heaven.

But when it comes to us, who have been given the Faith, and knowledge of it in its fullness; who have the chance of practicing it in every detail, of securing grace from so many different sources, if we go on neglecting these truths or ignoring our opportunities, what chance of salvation have we?

Does God's presence all around us influence our lives? In church, does our conduct measure up to our belief in the Real Presence? Do we frequently visit Christ living in the tabernacle? Do we attend every morning the stupendous miracle of the Mass?

St. Teresa of Avila says that prayer is best which brings an improvement in our work, and not necessarily that which brings the most satisfaction. Let us resolve to respect God's presence all around us by prayer and by a clean and faithful life. Let us go to Mass often and follow it with the missal. Let us receive Christ daily in Holy Communion with much reverence and respect. Let us visit Him frequently in the tabernacle. (From "Look Who'd Here"--a mimeographed weekly published in New York.)