

# Spirit of God always ready to awaken us

So when did we forget that we were God? Or, better, when did we become God? Or, perhaps even better, what am I talking about?

It all came together this past Pentecost. On this feast of the “Birthday of the Church,” the feast in which we celebrate the Holy Spirit coming on those first believers, a new awareness came to me. Jesus gave us his Father as our Father. He has given himself to us – body, blood, soul and divinity – in the Eucharist. Now He has given us his Spirit. This is not new knowledge. But the new awareness was that we have everything Christ has. What keeps us from believing this? What keeps us from living God-like lives?

True, the theologians do make a distinction. They speak of Christ as being divine by nature. We share divinity by adoption. And perhaps it is more theologically correct to speak of ourselves as being “divinized” – becoming God-like, rather than being God. But even allowing for some theological fine-tuning, the question remains the same. What keeps us from believing we are the presence of God?

For most of us, myself included, our earliest religious training holds us captive. We still think of God “up there” and us “down here.” If we’re good, we get to go “up there” forever after death. If we’re bad, we go “down there” – where the 100-degree weather never ends! Obviously, this model put us at a far distance from God. We had to earn our way there with faith and lots and lots of good works. And one mortal sin could wipe out a lifetime of goodness! This model created a lot of fear and anxiety in me, and in many like me, but offered no window at seeing ourselves as God-like. I was more conscious of the power of failure than of the power of faith.

I think Jesus came for a much nobler purpose. Rather than scaring us, He came to love us. He came to restore the image and likeness of God in which we were created. In our long history of competing images of God, Jesus would come to save us from the darkness. He came to replace fear of God with an awareness of sharing the life of God. And by giving us himself, his Father, and his Spirit, he would share with us

the intimacy of God's own life. We only sin when we forget the life of God that we share.

We repent, when we wake up to the God presence above us, with us and within us.

Try to imagine a world in which we actually believed this! What if 2 billion Christians really spoke and acted like Jesus?

Our human ego, of course, protests that such thinking is nonsense, that we can't walk on water, or work other miracles. No, we are not Bruce Almighty, a movie character who gets to play God. He uses his divine power mainly to show off or to impress his girlfriend.

Jesus showed no such ego. He used his miraculous powers, whether changing water into wine, multiplying loaves and fish, healing the sick or raising the dead, strictly for the good of others. Love was the only true miracle.

To answer my own question, what keeps us from believing in God's presence within us is that our world keeps us asleep. Our consumer culture, our entertainment industry, our constant bombardment with noise and sights and sounds, literally numb our spirits.

But what if we woke up? What if we allowed the Spirit of God to wake us up to who we really are? What if 2 billion people began to think and act like Jesus? What if we all worked miracles of love all the time?