

Where is God in my Life? A Reflection
by Fr. Glenn McDonald, CSB

“Where is God in my life?”

This is a question I get asked a lot as a priest. Theology can point towards an answer, but only an experience from someone’s everyday life will satisfy as a response.

I am embarrassed to admit that even as a seminarian and later as a priest, I was having a lot of trouble seeing God in my own life. How could I then point out the presence of God in someone else’s life? Thankfully, God began to teach me how to recognize His presence in my own life, which enabled me to help other people see His presence in their lives, too. He used a special relationship to do this.

I am very fortunate to have my grandmother living in Edmonton. Her name is Lulu. And yes, she is as adorable as her name.

During the four years I spent studying at the University of Alberta, which was only a short bus ride away from my grandmother’s house, I rarely visited her. I was always too busy. I had every excuse not to go: I had homework to do; the bus would take too long; I had plans with my friends; I would go next week.

When I completed my degree and was departing from Edmonton, I had to say goodbye to my grandmother. Despite the fact that I had visited her only once a semester, she was very sad to see me go. In that moment, my degree suddenly seemed empty. I could see how precious my grandmother’s presence was in my life. I had been so blind, but it was too late. It was time for me to leave the city.

Fortunately, I was given a second chance many years later, when my religious community appointed me to Edmonton. I resolved to visit my grandmother each Friday. And I did!

Our visits followed the same pattern. I would bring her flowers. She would make me a sandwich and a cup of tea. We would talk about her week, how the family was doing, and if she had heard from relatives in Saskatchewan. I would share about my work. After an hour, I would depart. Each visit was ordinary, but I always felt fulfilled when I left — like I had participated in something of great value.

In 1 John, we read, “Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” Over time, I realized that my weekly visits with my grandma were an experience of love. An experience of genuine love is an experience of God. I became aware that these visits were one of the ways that God was present and active in my life.

What are the situations in your life in which you experience sincere love? Who are the people in your life who love you the most, with self-sacrificial, giving love? It is in these situations, and interacting with these people, that God’s presence and action in your life becomes real.

Today, when a student asks me, “Where is God?” I respond with, “Let me give you an example from my own life. Her name is Lulu.”

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