

A REFLECTION BY FR RICHARD ROHR FOR THE SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD – TODAY GOD IS REVEALED IN OUR LIVES

The Bible is filled with stories of people encountering God-regardless of whether they got everything right or everything wrong! Let's state it clearly: One foundational and yet revolutionary idea of the Bible is that God is manifest in the ordinary, in the actual, in the daily, in the now, in history, in the concrete incarnations of life. God does not hold out for the pure, the spiritual, the right idea, or the ideal anything. Apparently, the biblical God would much rather be in relationship than merely be right in solitude! This is why Jesus stands religion on its head.

*But it is also why we have to go through the seemingly laborious, boring, or even disturbing books of the Bible, such as Joshua, Judges, Kings, Chronicles, Leviticus, Numbers, and Revelation. We hear in these books about sin and war, adulteries and affairs, kings and killings, intrigues and deceits - the tragic and sad events of human life along with the ordinary and wonderful. Those books, documenting the life of real communities, of concrete and regular people, are telling us that "**God comes to us disguised as our life**" (a wonderful line I learned from my dear friend and colleague, Paula D'Arcy). But for most "religious" people this is actually a disappointment!*

In the Bible, we see God using the very wounded lives of very ordinary people, who would never have passed the tests of later Roman canonization processes. Moses, Deborah, Elijah, Paul, and Esther were at least complicit in murdering: David was both an adulterer and a liar; there were rather neurotic prophets like Ezekiel, Obadiah, and Jeremiah; an entire history of ridiculously evil kings and warriors - yet all these are the ones God works through. They are not summarily dismissed.

God's revelations are always concrete and specific. They are not a Platonic world of ideas and theories about which we can be right or wrong. Revelation is not something we measure, but something or someone we meet! All of this is called the "mystery of incarnation."

Our temptation now and always is to trust in our faith tradition of trusting in God, instead of trusting in God. They are not the same thing! Often our faith is in our tradition in which we can talk about people who have trusted God in the past. That's a sad way to avoid the experience itself, to avoid scary encounters with the living God, to avoid the ongoing Incarnation.

It's not about becoming spiritual beings nearly as much as about becoming human beings. The biblical revelation is saying that we are already spiritual beings; we just don't know it yet. The Bible tries to let us in on the secret, by revealing God in the ordinary. That's why so much of the text seems so mundane, practical, specific, and, frankly, unspiritual! The principle of the Incarnation proclaims that matter and spirit have never been separate. Jesus came to tell us that these seemingly different worlds are and always have been one.....