

August 21, 2020

Our Knowledge of God Is Participatory

In my time at Plymouth, I have heard from many Confirmation students—and as many adult members—that they don't believe in God. In response, I ask, "Tell me about the God you don't believe in." It's usually the God that looks like Santa Claus on a cloud and who either has abandoned the world or randomly controls it. I can honestly respond, "I don't believe in that God either."

I understand God as a creative energy that continually promotes life and embodies the world with love. Richard Rohr recently wrote that "our knowledge of God is participatory. God refuses to be intellectually 'thought,' and is only known in the passion and pain of it all, when the issues become soul-sized and worthy of us." That's the paradox. We cannot fully understand or know God unless we are willing to experience God. We must participate with God in order for this to happen.

In the gospels, Jesus is credited with saying, "There's only one sign I'm going to give you: the sign of the prophet Jonah." Sooner or later, life is going to lead us (as it did Jesus) into the belly of the beast, into a situation that we can't fix, can't control and can't explain or understand. That's where we can experience God. That's when we're uniquely in the hands of God. Right now, it seems the whole world is in the belly of the beast together. Let's be open to being safely held in the loving hands of God, even if we do not believe in it. Think about that!

Blessings,

Paula