

LESSON 4: REFLECTION

WHO GOD ISN'T

When did you first hear about God?

Who told you?

Who was that person to you?

What was it like when you went to Church?

Did you like the priest?

If you went to a Catholic primary school, what were your teachers like when they talked about God?

What were they people you associated with God or religion like?

How did your RE teachers relate to you?

Did important people in your life not believe or struggle with belief?

Did you pray and nothing seemed to happen?

Did you pray for something not to happen and it did?

Do you sometimes feel guilty or fear or just apathy when you think of God?

What were your Confirmation classes like?

If you've ever been on a retreat or pilgrimage did you feel you met God there?

IS IT EASY TO HAVE OUR OPINION OF GOD CLOUDED BY

SOME OF THE PEOPLE WE HAVE MET?

HAVE YOU EVER MET A TRULY HOLY OR A THOROUGHLY GOOD PERSON?

HOW DID THEY MAKE YOU FEEL?

MASS MEDITATION

Our sins would define us for ever and our weaknesses would overwhelm us. From our perspective, God can seem a bit crazy; he becomes sin, death, small, weak and allows himself to be defeated, so we don't have to.

Now God's unexpected ways of doing things continues today. God could appear in the sky or take over the internet for everyone to see him and prove his existence. Again, if I were God, I'd probably drawn to this idea! But God's vision is vast, eternal and all-loving. **God's plan is beyond our understanding.** He planned to stay with us forever after the resurrection. He kept this promise, but just like his birth, death and resurrection he does so in a way that we'd never have guessed.

If you walked up to someone in the street today and said, "Come and meet God", yes God, the one who made you. Obviously they would think you were not sane, as they thought about Jesus himself. If you took that person to Mass and you told them that Jesus is present, what would they think? After seeing the Eucharist raised up by the priest at Mass, the stranger may say; "that was God? – it certainly didn't look like God." Why would he be in something that looks like a wafer?

Looks can be deceiving. Some of the people at the time Jesus was alive didn't believe he was God because he didn't fit into their preconceived ideas about what the saviour would be like. **But those who opened their hearts, like Mary at the resurrection, recognised him.** We all have preconceived ideas about what God should look like. We even like to think we know how God should act in the world. When "God" doesn't do what I think he should be doing, I can be tempted to say, "ahh, you see, he doesn't exist!"

The challenge is to open our hearts, like those who followed Jesus and open our minds like to the one who is real - reality itself. When we don't go beyond our own expectations, we reduce God to 'my image of what God should be'. Now even the most intelligent among us have limitations – is that all God is, a construct of what I want him to be? Rejected when he doesn't live up to my expectations? In a human relationship where there is love, we are surprised, amazed and delighted when we are allowed to be ourselves and when we get to know the 'real' other person. People describe there being layers of depth in another, whether it be a parent with a child, a couple in love or among friends. You think you know all there is to know about a person and then you realise there's much more, even greater depths to that person and to yourself when you are with them. How much more is there with God.

What are the depths of God that are there for us to discover? Do we allow God to be God in our lives or do we not allow God to be 'the real God' the same way some people don't accept 'the real us'?