

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Awareness of God's Presence Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time Saturday,
October 1, 2016 8:15 AM Job 42:1-3, 5-6, 12-17; **Lk 10:17-24** **St. Therese of the**
Child Jesus, Virgin and Doctor of the Church (We have to shed some of the barriers we have
built up around ourselves.)

“Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I say to you, many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.”

Yes, many kings and prophets and other grown-ups, but children are different—that’s the earlier part here. **“Although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned”** and the kings and the prophets, **“you have revealed them to the childlike.**

If we study children, we see that they really do see things, and it is not fantasy. **Most children have, actually, real experiences of God.** Later on they, looking back, evaluate their experiences as fantasy, but they really weren’t; they were real experiences. And quite a few have been recorded, and they are astonishing. I myself remember in my own life many real encounters with God. Jesus here says that this is God’s gracious will to reveal himself to the childlike. In another text he said, “Unless you turn and become like children you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven,” where **the kingdom of heaven means the conscious awareness of God’s presence.** Of course God is always present. We cannot banish God from the world, from creation, from anything he made, and nothing that God would actually detach himself from could exist. **Existence itself depends on constant sustaining power of God**—the sustaining power of God. So God is always present everywhere, to every place. **In every moment of time God is present, but we are not aware of it.** But that’s where the childlike comes in. **Children can be aware of it.** They can be aware of things and see things that adults don’t see or aren’t aware of, including prophets. Kings—it’s not surprising that kings would not see these things because

kings are preoccupied with worldly matters. But prophets one might think since they are messengers of God would be on the inside of the presence of God, but they aren't always.

So these readings are given to us to help us see that **we can even now on this earth have a deeper awareness of God.** But in order to do that **we have to shed some of the barriers we have built up around ourselves,** including barriers of skepticism and supposed learning because “God has not revealed to the learned and to sophisticated, but to the childlike.”

Today we celebrate the memorial of **St. Therese of Lisieux, who was a woman who did see all this.** As a young girl she had a deep relation with God, and she continued as she grew up to maintain this very beautiful and tender and intimate relation to God. And **we can model ourselves too on her and her work and find God in all things, even the littlest things.** As she discovered, the key to the gospel is really found in 1 Corinthians: “And the greatest of all is love.” The greatest gift is love, and with that we are with God always.