

May 8, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Easter



Center for Spiritual Development

IN WHOM WE LIVE, AND MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING

By Fr. David C. Robinson, SJ

An Excerpt from Today's First Reading

After Paul's escorts had taken him to Athens, they came away with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible. Then Paul stood up at the Areopagus and said: "You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very religious. For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands because he needs anything. Rather it is he who gives to everyone life and breath and everything. He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being,' as even some of your poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'"

Reflection

On his Second Missionary Journey, Paul visited a number of Greek cities, some of which became important centers of Christian life—including Philippi and Corinth. Acts narrates his visit to Athens, once the center of Greek power and culture. There he encountered people of deep learning and profound religious thought. Chapter 17 relates how Paul went to the Areopagus, the historical site of Greek jurisprudence and philosophical debate. There he engaged the people at the level of their religious aspirations and traditions. He equated their “Unknown God” to the **“God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth ... who gives to everyone life and breath and everything.... He fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us.”** The rigorous advocate for the Jewish Covenant, the Pharisaic promoter of the Law and its roots in Judaic history, had truly become the great advocate of a God for all times, places, and peoples. He now stood forth as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

The famous phrase at the conclusion of this message, included in the Sixth Preface for Sunday Masses in Ordinary Time—**In him we live, and move, and have our being** (attributed to the 3rd century BCE Greek poet, Aratus)—declared a universal divine intention for the salvation of all the living. All life abides in God who is the source of all. Jesus is the mediator of that loving gift, no longer to be viewed simply as the Messianic Savior of the Jewish people. Instead, he has become the portal of spiritual vision by which all human souls can recognize the intimacy of God within, around, and through them. For every faithful person, the truth of God is not a possession or a validation. It is the miracle of an illumination that opens us to the unfathomable mystery we receive and are. We ‘have our being’ as members of the One who creates and fulfills all that has ever been and all that can ever be.



Ignatius in Adoration
Photo by David C. Robinson, SJ

For Pondering

- What does it mean to you to say that you “have your being” in God?
 - How do you identify with Paul’s invitation to a truly universal perspective toward God’s saving grace?
 - How would you explain this expansive notion of salvation to someone who prefers a more structured model for a religious life and vision?
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