



God Communicates in Many Ways

By William A. Barry, S.J.

(reflection on Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*)

God is always communicating with us. For one thing, God's one act not only creates a universe, but also continues to keep it in existence and to move it toward what God intends, the kingdom of God. Since we human beings are created as God's thinking, dreaming, willing images in this world, one might even say, God's surrogates in this world, God is always communicating with us to move us to be such images. In spite of appearances, God is never absent, never silent. But we very often, or even most often, don't hear or pay attention to what God is communicating. Again I am reminded of Denise Levertov's poem, "Primary Wonder," which makes note of the many voices and clutter that deafen and blind us to God's communication. David Fleming reminds us that Ignatian spirituality is a way to become attuned to God's presence and communication in everyday life. I would like to point to some ways I have found God in my own experience and in that of others.

Haven't you often been surprised by joy, perhaps at a strikingly beautiful sunrise or a sunset, a call from a good friend when you were a bit down in the dumps, a touching story in the morning paper, a child's smile, or any number of other events? If you paid attention to that experience, you might have noticed the welling up of a great desire for "you knew not what" and a feeling of great well-being. I consider such experiences as being touched by the creative desire of God for this universe and for me.

Haven't you been moved to tears by someone's story of loss and pain, a friend's story, perhaps, or even an event described on television news? Have you ever wondered about the source of those tears? I have come to believe that they are a pale reflection of God's reaction to the suffering of this world. As a result I have often felt compassion for what God endures because of human folly and suffering.

What I am suggesting is that we pay attention to our daily experiences for inklings of God's communication to us. We are, after all, God's images in this world. We may find out how God is communicating with us all the time.