

## Too Small?

There is a book of which I remember nothing but the title: Your God Is too Small. That, of course, is a silly title, because our God is greater than the whole universe, which God created, and which continues to exist thanks to God's providence. Yet even sillier is the truth which it tells.

First of all, there is the fact that the great God of heaven and earth chose to become small for our sake. "Though He was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of us all." He took on Himself a body like ours with all its limitations and infirmities. Moreover, He chose to be born in a humble stable – a cave, a mere hole in the earth, where even the light of day was walled off. Of course, Christ is the Light of the World, and by His Presence He illumined the darkness of the cave; moreover, He conquered even the darkest obscurities afflicting the human condition – namely sin and ignorance. In so doing, He broke the chains that seek to bind us, the walls which seek to hem us in.

Problem: people do not like to have their work disparaged and destroyed. Thus it was with the makers of chains that bind, the builders of walls which imprison, the purveyors of ignorance which engulfs in darkness: Jesus was a threat to them, and He needed to be gotten rid of. They put His Body into a tomb, thinking that the rock would hold Him captive, thus allowing them to go about their business of imprisoning the human spirit. He proved them wrong: as the icon shows Christ liberating Adam and Eve from Hades, so does He liberate us from the smallness and pettiness to which we are prone.

The second silly thing is that we are not unlike those soldiers who sought to make the tomb of Jesus "Resurrection-proof": where Christ's resurrection seeks to open us to limitless expansiveness, we all too often fear the mind-blowing implications of this great grace. Because of our fear, we set up barriers and impose limitations; like the TSA security agents at the airport during periods of high alert, we go into "damage-control" mode. Problem: by trying to "save" ourselves from the exhilarating roller-coaster ride which is our individual and collective salvation history, we close ourselves off to the very salvation which our life is all about. And because of our fear, we try to impose our own limitations on those who threaten us by daring to be so "alive". Archie Bunker used to tell Edith, "Stifle!" That is not the way of Jesus, Who said, "I have come so that you might have life, and life to the fullest." As a lady in St. Louis once said, "The tabernacle isn't locked from the inside."

We are all guilty of such foolishness – as the prayer before communion has us say, "of whom I am the first". I have enough to do just examining my own conscience for all the ways I try to shrink God and His place in my life. I hope you weren't expecting me to examine your conscience for you too! Forget it! You'll have to do that yourself. And when you're done with that, groveling won't help. The only thing to do is to follow Ronald Reagan's advice to Mikhail Gorbachev: "Tear down this wall!" It is a daunting task which requires a whole new way of thinking. FDR tells us that we have nothing to fear but fear itself. In his first letter, St. John tells us that love leaves no room for fear. He also tells us that God is love. So what are you afraid of? What are you waiting for? Let yourself be loved – not to death, but to life. Dare to really live!

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