

Don't you just love that song the choir sang? It says so much, in one word! God is "Beyond" ... beyond the farthest stars, beyond our knowing, God is the Great "I AM" as God said to Moses ... So if we are seeking God, our method can be: Look beyond, Look deeply, then Go beyond, Go deeper! God is often referred to as a "Mystery." God "moves in mysterious ways" says one hymn. Another hymn starts with the well known lines "Immortal, Invisible God" ... So do we just shrug our shoulders and say "I Don't Know... Forget about trying to get to know some invisible "God?" Well, perhaps "I Don't Know" is a good *starting place!* It shows openness, a willingness to be humble and to learn. (It's also a good choice for the name of a boat... check out a fishing trawler at the North End Boat Club!) Questions in life usually lead to more questions. We learn more and more, the more people we meet, so we also realize how little we all know!

I did a brief Bible study on the word "deep." In Genesis, at the beginning of creation, we read that the Spirit hovered over the deep waters. In the Psalms we remember the famous lyric, "Deep calls to deep, at the thunder of thy waterfalls" ... (notice the waterfalls on page one of the worship bulletin.) At Niagara Falls, you really hear the thunder! And the story of Job, a good man who suffered greatly, has such a strong reference to God as beyond our knowing! Remember the challenge he heard from God... basically: Were you there when I created the world and the deep sea creatures? Have you been to the depths of the sea? Job, stop your belly-aching and criticisms of my Creation; show a little humility and trust. You don't know all the reasons for pestilence and disease. (Maybe this virus is teaching us some humility. We just *don't know* absolute answers to our questions about who is most contagious and what are the best

remedies. We need to admit it's an ongoing learning curve, and that government policies are based on "*Given what we know right now,*" which also means "*Given what we don't know right now!*")

Back to the Bible and our mysterious "God..." In the letters of Paul, he claims that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with "sighs too *deep* for words." He also says that the Spirit searches the "*deep things of God.*" And in the beautiful reading this morning Paul speaks about "how wide, how long, how *deep* is the love of Christ...."

Again, this is not to say that we give up in our search for God. We just become continual seekers, and realize that we do begin to see, we do begin to catch glimpses of the Spirit, we experience new light, and we are born again (over and over). So one of the ways we seek God is to look beyond, to look deeply, beneath the surface of things. We become people who don't take things at face value, we are not content with superficiality. One of the places we can watch closely and learn is, of course, Nature. I've had the opportunity to watch a lot of birds this summer. One particular seagull, though seemingly pretty large, kept following its mother around and whining for food. The mother gull literally turned her back on the youngster continually, would walk away, then fly away. From nature, we can learn universal truths, such as truths about "growing up!"

I began re-reading the wisdom of Thomas Moore (the one who is still alive). He grew up Catholic, entered the monastery, later left the monastery and married a lady of the Sikh faith. He was a psychotherapist for many years, and wrote the famous book *Care of the Soul*. His more recent book, *A Religion of One's Own*, has an inscription inside the the front cover, to me, that says "GO DEEP!" Yes, he "goes deep" in the book; one of the

chapters has to do with dreams, and the importance of dreams in our spiritual growth. I myself did a lot of dream therapy in my younger years, and I learned a lot about myself and about universal truths. I recommend dreamwork highly; just keep a note pad next to the bed, and jot down images and stories as you wake up. Some images may never make any sense to us, but many have obvious meaning, and some recurring dreams can point to issues we are working on. Carl Jung, the psychotherapist who wrote extensively about dreams, insisted that when he began his own dream work it changed his life entirely. Thomas Moore tells of dreams he had as a youth... dreams about flying... his arms like wings, feeling free in the air. Then apparently in midlife, his dreams of flying were about being in an airplane that was trying to lift off in the middle of city streets! Strange images, yes, but for Thomas, it spoke clearly to him about his feeling trapped by the conventions and expectations of society. Dreams can move you to make changes in your life.

Dreams can also represent a calling or a leading from God; they may come from the spirit world. We remember that Joseph, son of Jacob was quite the dreamer, so he rose to positions of power in Egypt by interpreting dreams of Egyptian officials. We remember that Jesus' earthly father Joseph had dreams about his son being born of the Holy Spirit, and that the Wise Men were warned in a dream not to return to Herod. Dreams and visions were promised on the day of Pentecost to young and old, to all who are open to the leading of the Spirit.

A few years ago, someone wrote a song about ways that we might all spiritually "Go Deeper!" Yes, I'm the one who wrote the song! I think I wrote it shortly after reading Thomas Moore's book. The verses try to give

examples of looking beyond the surface of things, beyond cultural conventions, deeper into the meaning of things, into spiritual truths and callings. In a nutshell, Verse 1 says: Why get too caught up in looking at screens... it gets addictive, and can stunt the love and growth of face to face relationships! Verse 2 says: Dualism, black/white either/or thinking can be endlessly hostile (e.g. Evolutionists vs. Creationists); Go deeper, find a “3rd way,” a “middle way,” a compromise, see many colors and shades of color (e.g. How about, as many say, “God’s form of creation *is* evolution” ...). Verse 3 says: Life is not all happy-clappy, and “salvation” is not a one-time thing; Salvation is ongoing, and involves the fires of transformation. Verse 4 says: It’s judgmental and blind to continually see ourselves as right and the other as wrong; Jesus had deep and fiery words to say: Anyone without sin can cast the first stone! And Verse 5 says: If the Bible is read as the “letter” of the law, it surely will kill; but if read more deeply, finding the “spirit” of the words, it will give life. (Ross sings the song “Going Deeper”).

The Chorus of the song points to Jesus Christ as Savior, the one who always goes deeper (“You have heard it said, but I say unto you”). And he also encouraged us to keep going deeper, saying “I have much more to say to you, but you cannot bear it now, so the Holy Spirit will *lead you* into all truth.” God, the Sacred Spirit, surely can be found in the things of everyday life, but we have to look closely, look beyond, and “Go Deeper.” Amen.