Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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“We will come to you and make our dwelling with you” (John 14:25).

Acts 14:5-18; Jn 14:21-26

My sister Mary once remarked that the promise of God's indwelling made prayer so much easier: “Now I won’t have to talk so loud.”

The very notion that God lives within us is perhaps Christianity’s best-kept secret. Good people assume that God is at some great distance, and that seeking God requires some great effort. But, in fact, prayer ought to be the most natural thing we do, because it is our very nature to be attuned to the source of our very existence. If God was not with us, naming us and loving us, we would not exist. It is as simple as that.

So why is it so complicated? The fragmentation we all experience has something to do with our capacity for self-consciousness, an interior self- awareness that both

helps and hinders us from seeing ourselves clearly and honestly in relationship to God and to other people.

Protecting our sensitive egos, competing with others for approval, denying our faults and exaggerating our virtues — these ongoing dynamics conspire to distort our perspective and exhaust us emotionally. If spiritual growth and intimacy with God are thwarted, it is not because God is absent but because we are distant within ourselves and unable to find our way back to our true selves as lovable and capable of love.

Jesus promises his disciples that if they keep his word, he and his Father will come and make their dwelling within them. The Holy Spirit enters our self-awareness and unites us with God in love. It is the core insight of major saints like Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena that God fashions of our self-consciousness an interior castle or cell where we are continually in communion with self and God. This interior place becomes God’s indwelling. To be conscious of this and to operate from this place of clarity is the secret of true freedom. Be yourself. Rest in God.

Isn’t this the dream of wholeness and peace that underlies our deep, natural desire for integrity, completeness and intimacy? We can then be the focus of welcome and hospitality. Be open. Invite. Wait, and God will appear, the divine Guest who was always there, but we did not know it because we had yet to know ourselves.