

Sr. Margaret Dorgan's Weekly

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WE ARE GOD'S HANDIWORK, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS (Eph 2:10)

Who am I? This question is asked in several places of the Hebrew Bible by someone like the shepherd David who is startled that God would appoint him to take on a special role. Who am I? Do I ever pause to ask myself who I am as I look at my inward mirror? "Know yourself" is the emphatic command of ancient Greek philosophy. Modern psychology offers many schemas for identifying our particular personalities. We give answers to a pre-devised test that probes our motivations and preferences. Does that really tell me who I am? To some extent, yes.

To seek my own identity in the deepest part of my being, I turn to the One Who created me, the One Who says, "I have called you by name. You are Mine" (Is 43:1). God made me who I am, and each day of earthly life has asked me to understand better why I am here.

Human life is a gift carefully crafted by a divine Artisan, Who has instilled something marvelous in every person. It is not pride to recognize the mark of eternal beauty on my being, for it is all bounty from God. We try to perceive in others what makes them uniquely who they are, each one wholly distinct from everyone else even if a certain similitude does exist. "Who is just like you?" The ultimate answer is: Nobody. You were born to show forth what had not been present before.

Yes, we share similar qualities and they build a bridge uniting us. "You have your father's features." I heard that often. My mother was beautiful, but I do not resemble her. However, I am rather like her in temperament.

It is part of human curiosity to wonder about other people. What motivates them? How do they view their own existence? What makes them happy or sad? We can be in the same situation as someone else and yet observe that our responses differ significantly. A friend once recited the old saw, "Two men looked out from prison bars. One saw mud and the other saw stars." She hoped for a fruitful commentary about the various ways we perceive things from someone present who had actually studied perceptual philosophy. But the answer came: "I wouldn't see either. I'd be too busy writing my congressman." So much for deep insight.

Actually that reply had pragmatic value, worthy of a philosopher. We should examine if any action might bring about release from what imprisons us. Jesus has given the true answer which leads us to freedom no matter where we are. "The spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you" (Ro 8:2). Jesus calls us to that liberty clothed, as we are, in our separate psyches.

In the days after Easter, we see the followers of the Risen Lord reach out to both Jews and Gentiles, bringing them awareness of the true life each is called to. Christ's resurrection joins earth to heaven. In His glorified humanity, we see how our own human nature, weak and imperfect as it is, will be transformed.

God has a purpose in creation. Each day its twenty-four hour movement beckons us toward an ongoing fulfillment. The divine intention unfolds as we search out its meaning. "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, Who formed you from the womb. I am the Lord Who made all things" (Is 44;24).

While we pursue our way through the variety of circumstances life presents, do we ever say, "I wish I were different"? *Don't*. God rejoices in your particular individuality. Yes, each one of us has to strive to overcome deficiencies, to learn from failures. At the same time, we should recognize our praiseworthy qualities. They can often be seen more clearly when others affirm them. This is how friends enable us.

No friend speaks with more power to arouse us to make use of the positive aspects of our makeup than Jesus. He is our model. He provides grace to understand how to move ahead, how to call forth those characteristics in us that will help us advance in goodness.

God has fashioned you to be who you are, and me to be who I am. The Holy Spirit is poured out on each of us to form us into a unique reflection of divine beauty. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all God's benefits....Who fills your lifetime with good" (Ps 102: 2,5).

Be glad you are who you are. God is.

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