

PASTORAL REFLECTION FOR FATHER'S DAY

June 20, 2021

One of my favorite memories of my father comes from my preschool years before my sister was born and while I was still an only child. When he would come home from his work as manager of the local Ford dealership, I would be watching for our car to enter the driveway and then I would run shrieking to a hiding place. He would enter the house, kiss mom always before he did anything else, and put his hat and coat in the entry closet with the squeaky door. Following that squeak, I knew he would begin the ritual of searching for me saying loudly for my benefit, "Where could she be? She's not in the closet. She's not under the bed. I wonder where she could be? I guess I'll have to just keep looking until I find her." As he would get closer, my heart would begin pounding and I could hardly contain myself until he would find me with, "Here she is!" and I would leap into his arms delighted. Then it would be his turn to hide and I would look for him with the same ritual. The most amazing thing about that ritual as I look back on it, is that every single day I would hide in the same place . . . and so would he! I wanted to be sure he would find me and I wouldn't miss that moment in his arms. For his part, I know now that he was tired and just wanting to sit quietly with the Ames Daily Tribune for a few minutes before supper, so he didn't want my search for him to go on for too long.

Later in life, when I prayed with the image of God as "Father", it was filled with the memory of this ritual. I don't think God plays hide and seek with us unless God, too, plans always to be found in the same and most obvious place, waiting eagerly for us to leap into that Welcoming Presence and be held in love. While I have grown away from the image of a male God figure, there is a part of this ritual that has continued to be part of my relationship - seeking Holy Mystery, knowing that Holy Mystery wants to be found, and having Holy Mystery find me every time for that leap into Loving Presence.

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