



A Seminarian's Reflection: Experiencing God in Deeper Ways

By Matthew Selzer

A Seminarian's Reflection by Matthew Selzer is published periodically for parishioners of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. Matt is a parishioner at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. A graduate of North Hills High School and the University of Pittsburgh, Matt began pre-theological studies at Saint Paul Seminary and Franciscan University of Steubenville in 2019. He is now assigned for theological studies at Saint Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, MD.

Either as a resolution in the new year or as a general life goal, you may desire to experience God in deeper, more intimate ways. You may ask yourself, "What can I do (next)?" Sometimes, we may think we need to have mystical experiences to experience the fullness of God's power and love. God gives some people mystical experiences, but I argue that we have easier, more immediate access to Him.

First, we need to do some basic metaphysics and epistemology. (Bear with me!) We are human, and insofar as we are human, we have a human nature. It is in our nature to come to knowledge through our senses. (We see these words. We hear others. We smell food in the kitchen.)

If, then, it is in our nature to come to knowledge through sense experiences, then we need sense experiences to experience God. (Remember that goal?) In fact, this principle affirms the Incarnation, which we celebrate on Christmas (and throughout the

entire year). Saint Thomas Aquinas says that the Incarnation was fitting for our humanity. It was the only way that we could know God.

We can apply this principle of knowledge through sense experience in countless ways, but two came to mind in writing this reflection: Eucharistic adoration and Sacred Scripture. Christ makes himself physically (sensibly) present to us in the Eucharist and speaks to us through the written (and divinely inspired) words of the Bible.

We should never feel limited by our human nature... God delights in creating us as human beings, and the Incarnation affirms and redeems everything about our humanity! We do not need to hope and pray that He will appear to us in mystical visions (although even some of these require the senses).