



# Boston Catholic Journal

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## The *Eternal Present* and the Living God

"He is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are  
alive."  
Saint Luke 20.38



**There** are none who were, who are, or who will ever be .... that are not *alive* to God.

Even those yet to be!

I say "yet" to be, for they *will* be — but are not yet.

"Where are they?", you ask.

"With God", I will answer you.

This perplexes you. How can even they who are *to be* — but *are not yet – be?*

How can they "be" before they have "been", or "are", or even "were"?

God has given us the beautiful, if sometimes painful, faculty of memory. Here, in this repository of our lives, we keep, as it were alive, things past, and what is present and instantly passes into what was and is no more. These things reside within us, even if we would sometimes let them go. They remain with us, as it were, as things that do not pass, but remain in some frame of time preserved as a vignette to which we hearken. In a sense what has been, has never ceased to be for us.

In this we are like unto God. It is a part of the *imago Dei*, the Image of God in which we were created by Him Who created us in His likeness.

What is before us, we do not question, even as it passes like so many beads of mercury that we attempt to grasp, but which ever elude us and ineluctably fall away into the past. Yet we keep them.

What we do not possess is the ability to keep within, that which is yet to come, yet to pass, yet to be. We nevertheless know that such things, whatever they may be, will come, and like their predecessors before them, will come into our lives and pass into memory where we will keep what is, to us, no more.

## The Eternal Present

God has no such limitation. He lives in an eternal Present, unbound by the ambits of time conjugated by temporal limitations inflected by us in terms of "past", "present" and "future". As we keep what has been, and what is, within us, experienced as either present or past — God keeps the "future", the things that "will be" (to us) and already "have been" (to Him). But even this is incorrect, for there are no things that "have been" to God — only "what is" — what resides in the Present, the perpetual Present in which His own Being is lived, enacted – without tense.

This is why Jesus says, God is the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob – and not "was" the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. He **IS** their God. He "is" their God, (Who is the "Living God") ... because they "are" *the living* before God. They are present to Him.

You were present to Him before you were present to your mother in her womb. You still are!

"What!?", you say.

***The totality of your being:*** your being *before* your conception, your being in your mother's womb, your being once you have passed beyond it, your *present* being, and your being *yet to be* — what you will "become" — and more still .... your being after your being in *this* life has passed — ***IS*** before God.

As Saint Paul said, "now we see in part". God sees the whole. And keeps it!

Do not sorrow for your dead as though they are no more.

Do not lay violent hands upon your yet to be born, as though they are not yet.

Do not see your life as one that has passed.

It *is* — ***all*** of it!

They ***are*** — ***all*** of them!

Because, as Jesus tells us, "*to Him all are alive.*"

And this is great consolation for us — once we have understood well.

Nothing is lost to God ... not even our own despair and stupidity. Do not be harsh on yourself. He knows that you are but dust and ashes — and the gift of life that He has given you — and those you love ... or ought to.

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for the Boston Catholic Journal



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