



Boston Catholic Journal

www.boston-catholic-journal.com
editor@boston-catholic-journal.com

Why we have Lost God (“What is the Matter?”)

We live in a world of matter

Matter is the substance of the senses. It is apprehensible. We touch it, feel it, manipulate it, make things of it, and even destroy it (yes, I know the principle of “the conservation of matter”, but you get the point.) It is tactile, sensuous, and often pleasing to the eye, the touch, and our other senses. It alternately excites us and repels us. It is what we see when we open our eyes, what we feel when we touch anything.

It is the world we know

Increasingly, it is the *only* world we know. Every other “possible world” has receded before the incursion of the senses and the accompanying demand for instantaneity: pleasure *now*, satisfaction *now*, information *now*, fulfillment *now* — and on a broader level, peace *now*, justice *now* and equality *now*. We have all heard the political and social mantra that first came to us from the tumultuous and purple-hazed 60’s by now, and we even know its cadence. The “cause” matters not, for the response has by now become childish reflexive: “*What do we want?*” (insert whatever here) “*When do we want it? Now!*”

Again. And again. And again, as though repeatedly demanding what we want like a spoiled child will produce it ... because it worked when we were children. Our parents taught us by example, by collapsing before the incorrectitude of the negative “*No.*” We always got what we wanted.

And so did our parents.

Do you want anything — however absurd? Then agitate, demand, and *never* take “no” as an answer, however unimpeachable the authority. Not even from God. Not even from His Church

which we hold to be both the the Bride and the Body Christ. We want to “*feel*” justified, be “affirmed” in our childishness, and have *our* way if “the other” is unwilling — however clear, however ontologically defining the principles upon which and in which it exists *in se* —and if we are denied our desires, then we will *legislate* them, find some obscure or unbalanced “academic” to “authenticate” us, a celebrity “in solidarity” with our petulance to publicize us, and a venal politician to “empower” us ... until our *desires* become our *laws* — which is to say, until our *senses* grasp, seize, what they lust for.

Politics is the venue of power, not mind. Hollywood is the venue of *entertainment*, not *reality* which, despite the protestations of the senses, is only discernible through the mind and that impetuously inconvenient faculty called reason that we abhor because it defies us.

The Parallax of Reason ... and Sensation

We do not want reason. We do not want mind. We want *sensation* — the stimulation and the satisfaction of the senses! What have we to do with inflexible reason? With God? With things less than rhapsodic, with lasting concepts ... even purported everlasting realities ... with the deliverances of anything devoid of tactility, before the contempt of the court of immediacy that governs the senses?

We ourselves are composed of matter — we recognize this even if we have forgotten that it is only half the equation of our being human, for the other half is *spirit* ... the immaterial soul which is not apprehensible by the senses, only by the mind, a concept perhaps best expressed by the German noun, “*Geist*” that alternately denotes, “the mind”, “the psyche”, “spirit”, “soul”, and even “ghost”.

We are profoundly more than our appetites. Just as God is profoundly more than “feeling good about oneself.” Eternity extends before us — and we know it, but we treat it as we treat time: passing, changing, mutable, pliable to our desires. And for a while it is so.

But we know that it will not always be so. We sense “ending”. We *intuit* that there is a terminus to our being in time and that something must lie beyond it — even if it is the skeptic's cold, sterile, embalmed “nothing” that we nevertheless irresistibly perceive as *something* in what we persist in describing as “nothingness”. Because we are permeated with time and insensible (and this is not the same as “inapprehensible”) to the eternal, we even *perceive* “nothingness” — despite our insistence that it is otherwise — as somehow perduring. It is a tentative state of utter suspension — *even while we declare that nothing is suspended*. It is a kind of eternal obit that will declare, somehow inscribe, even monumentally testify to our being long after it has ceased and presumably never to be read.

When we lost God — whenever that might have been — we lost our *raison d'être*. We do not know it because we refuse to confront it and we do not confront it because we have not known God, or once having known Him have repudiated Him, even denied Him, in favor of our own temporal *desires* which, like their objects in space and time, will surely pass. Only God remains. History testifies to this.

Desistite, et agnoscite me Deum: "Be still and know that I am God!"

Our restlessness is both an invitation by God and the testimony to our blindness apart from Him.



Copyright © 2004 - 2014 Boston Catholic Journal. All rights reserved.