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# Chilling with Jesus

Doug McManaman

One of my Grade Ten students recently asked me: “Why doesn’t Jesus come down once in a while and just, you know, chill with us?” The class found this very amusing.

Without a doubt, he asked a great question. Because the fact is, he has come down to each one of us at our schools to do just that, namely, to chill with us. Where is he? He’s in our school chapel. Christ is sacramentally present in our chapel, as well as in every chapel or Church that has a tabernacle containing the body of Christ. But isn’t he present everywhere? In our living rooms? In our homes? In our hearts? No more than He is in a garbage can — and who can deny that God is present in a garbage can, at least as First Cause.

The chapel presence referred to here is not a natural presence, but a sacramental presence, a presence that results from the words of consecration. That is why it is so important to spend a lot of time before the Blessed Sacrament, “chilling”, so to speak.

## *I just listen ... He just listens*

“Yes, but he doesn’t talk back”, replied my student. And this reminded me of Dan Rather, who once asked Mother Theresa about prayer:

“What do you say to God when you pray?” he inquired.

“Nothing,” replied Mother Theresa. “I just listen.”

“What does God say to you?” he responded, rather derisively.

“Nothing,” replied Mother Theresa. “He just listens.”

I guess this is what it means to chill with Jesus. “God speaks in the silence of the heart,” Mother Theresa always said. But His speaking is a listening, and you can hear him listen. That is how Mother Theresa knew that God just listens; she heard Him listen. And we too discover that He is listening to us the more we spend time alone with Him.

Sitting before the Blessed Sacrament is like sitting in the sun. It may not appear that anything is happening, but later on, after a time, it becomes rather evident that we’ve spent time out in the sun. So too, it may appear to be a waste of time sitting in the quiet of the Church, but the rays of the Son are penetrating us and changing us

and bringing much more color and beauty to our lives.

Not only will we discover that He is listening while we are before the tabernacle, but we come to know that He’s listening to us all the time, at every moment of our lives. The reason is that as we spend more time “chilling with Him,” so to speak, we begin to acquire the ability to see and hear, for this time alone with God opens up our eyes and ears so that we may begin to see and hear him outside the walls of the Church. Remember St. Augustine’s famous line on the first page of his Confessions: “Oh, Lord, you created us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” So, we really have to begin to chill with God more often.

## *Discovering our true identity*

We really ought to begin to rest in God now. The more we do so, the more we will discover who we really are. The more we will come to know ourselves. For it is through the Word (Son) that all things

came into being. God is our origin and our end. The more we return to God during the day, the more we discover who God intended us to be, the more we discover our true self, that is, our true identity.

We know all sorts of people who do not know their identity, but need to know. So what do they do? They create one for themselves. We see this especially in young teens who have not discovered who they are. They may spike their hair, wear chains hanging down from their pockets, poke things through their eyebrows, smoke cigarettes, try never to smile, etc. Recently I passed a car driven by a young teenage girl, and on the windshield of her car was painted in bold white letters: "BAD GIRL". This is how she wanted to be known, as a "bad girl". This was the identity she wanted for herself. Now I'm willing to bet that on top of being a "bad girl", she's probably not a very happy girl. And there's no doubt that she'll eventually grow up and get herself a new windshield. But it is sad indeed to see people needlessly missing out on their true identity.

One message that we ought to try to bring to young people is that if we really want to feel like our life is "all together", we have to pray more, that is, begin "chilling with Jesus". ■

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### Biographical Note: Doug McManaman



I was born in Etobicoke, Ontario but was raised in Montreal. After high school, I began studying for my B.A. in Philosophy at the University of St. Jerome's College. Two years into my studies I met Cecilia A. Messner. We were married by the beginning of my fourth year at Waterloo. We then moved to Montreal where I began studying for my M.A. in theology. After finishing the M.A., I began courses for the doctorate in Theology at the University of Montreal and for a Teacher's Certificate at McGill University. Upon graduation, I began teaching Religion at Regina Pacis Secondary School, founded by Spiritan Fr. Gerald FitzGerald, CSSp. Cecilia and I moved to Aurora, Ontario and opened up the house we bought to foster children. One of those foster children that arrived in our home was a small baby girl with Achondroplasia (dwarfism). She's small, but mighty, and her name is Sarah. We adopted her soon afterwards.

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