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Lenten Reflection: Who Is God?

by MELANNIE SVOBODA SND on MARCH 4, 2019

In my prayer, I sometimes come upon what others have said about God. Often their words enrich and expand my own experience of the Divine. In my collection of quotations, I have scores of quotes filed under the single word "God." Here are twenty of those quotes for your own prayerful pondering today. I thought this might be a good meditation for the beginning of Lent

1. Three speeches of God: Creation, Scripture, Incarnation. *Hans Urs Von Balthasar*
2. How did we ever get the idea that God... is merely a rescuer and not a midwife? *Sue Monk Kidd*
3. Thomas Merton's experience of God: "Mercy within mercy within mercy."
4. There are two things God endlessly communicates to us: "I am with you"... And "the way I am with you is love." *Pat Livingston*
5. God is greening power. *Hildegard of Bingen*
6. Once when I was preparing to spend a period of time in a hermitage...I asked my God if I could come and stay with Him for a while. She said: "Yes, but don't bring your God with you." *Edwina Gately*
7. It is easier for us to say what God is not, then what God is. *St. Augustine*



About Sister Melannie Svoboda, SND

Sister of Notre Dame,
teacher, student, author,
speaker, listener, friend,
poet, farm girl.



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Each Monday I'll post a short reflection, a simple musing on some aspect of spirituality— the everyday kind of spirituality that



includes things like walking in the park, slicing an onion for the casserole, caring for a child, studying for an exam, reading a line from scripture, laughing at a joke, or mourning a significant loss.

Along the way I welcome your questions, comments and insights too. After all, we're all in this life—this spiritual life—together!

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8. God is bread when you're hungry, water when you're thirsty, a harbor from the storm. God's a father to the fatherless, a mother to the motherless. God's my sister, my brother, my leader, my guide, my teacher, my comforter, my friend... God's my all in all, my everything. *Sister Thea Bowman*

9. With God, go over the sea; without God, not over the threshold. *Proverb*

10. God is life, not a vending machine. *Joan Chittister, OSB*

11. God comes to us disguised as our own life. *Paula D'Arcy*

12. My faith convinces me that we must have some chaos in the soul in order to dance with a dancing God. *Tim Unsworth*

13. God is sheer, exuberant, relational aliveness...inexhaustible source of new being... ground of hope for the whole created universe. *Elizabeth Johnson*

14. We have to live virtually the whole of our lives in the presence of an invisible and mute God. But that was never a bar to anyone seeking to come into contact with God. That is what prayer is. *R.S. Thomas*



15. By means of all created things, without exception, the Divine assails us, penetrates us, and molds us. *Teilhard de Chardin*

16. God is like a person who clears his throat while hiding, thus giving himself away. *Meister Eckhart*

17. Is your love of God secure enough that you can rage against Him? *Anthony DeMello, SJ*

18. Every authentic religious epiphany or encounter, every true experience of God in whatever form, makes a person less insular, less complacent, and less isolated—and more restless, more inspired, more engaged with the world and humanity. *Fr. Anthony Gittins*

19. Some souls are so full of pious furniture and ornaments that there is no room for God... They need to pull down the curtains, get rid of the knickknacks, and throw their premises open to the great simplicity of God. *Evelyn Underhill*

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20. Of all that God has shown me, I can speak just the smallest word, not more than a honey bee takes on her foot from an overspilling jar. *Mechtild of Magdeburg*



For reflection:

Did any of these quotes make you say, "I really like that one!" Or "I really agree with that one!" If so, which?

Did any of the quotes make you say, "I disagree!" or "What does that mean?" If so, which?

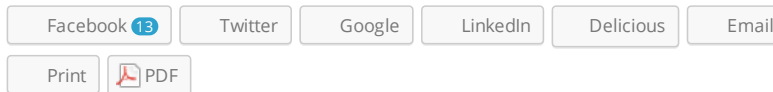
Do you have a quotation about God that you would like to share with us today? If so, please do so below.

I chose a traditional song for today, "How Great Thou Art." This hymn was written in 1885 in Sweden. It's based on a Swedish poem set to a traditional Swedish melody. The hymn was then translated into Russian and German. Eventually it made its way around the world. This version is sung in English by Chris Rice.



Would you like to respond to anything in today's blog? If so, please do so below.

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{ **33** comments... read them below or [add one](#) }

Thomas DeFreitas March 4, 2019 at 4:46 am



Amen to 6, 8, 13, and 18 most especially!

"The name of God is mercy. Mercy is true." Pope Francis

"God is not an afterthought. God thinks of me before I think of God." TD

"On high I dwell, and with the humble and crushed in spirit." Isaiah 57

And other words from the Psalms, from Julian, from G M Hopkins, from George Herbert, which emphasize God as refuge, harbour, haven, shelter, inspire me and fortify.

Thank you, Sr Melannie, as always. Looking forward to hearing from others!

REPLY

Susan B. March 4, 2019 at 5:40 am



Favorites: Numbers 8, 10 and 16.

“The great thing to remember is though our feelings come and go God’s love for us does not.” -C.S. Lewis

Sister Melanie, we are blessed to have you in our lives. I wait each week for your words of wisdom. Wishing you Lenten hope and joy.

Thank you!

REPLY

Theresa March 4, 2019 at 8:22 pm



That’s a very hopeful quote. Thank you for sharing.

REPLY

michelle couture March 4, 2019 at 5:52 am



I like number 10 ! That speaks to me today. Thank you for your posts. I love starting Mondays with you. God Bless You.

REPLY

Susan C Slaninka March 4, 2019 at 6:19 am



Love your choice of quotes today. I think my favorite is #8 as for me that one makes God a more personal God in all the relationships we have. I am drawn to St Augustine and a favorite quote of mine is, “God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.” A friend one year gave me a Christmas card with that

message and I framed it for the wonderful message it sent. God bless you
Melannie for all that you do.

REPLY

Michelle March 4, 2019 at 6:35 am



No. 11, spoke loud and clearly for me today.
Thank you for sharing.

REPLY

Susan Vogt March 4, 2019 at 7:20 am



I like quote #4. I have always found inspiration in Patricia Livingston's
reflections and this quote is a simple and beautiful reminder of God's love for us.

REPLY

Deb March 4, 2019 at 7:31 am



Number 6
Not sure where this came from other than my spiritual director, the greatest
impediment to your next experience of God is your last experience of God.
Thank you for your weekly sharing.

REPLY

Pat Conron March 4, 2019 at 7:31 am



Behold God, beholding you, and smiling!
Anthony DeMello SJ

REPLY

John E Hopkins March 4, 2019 at 8:11 am



Good morning, Sr. Melannie! Whole lot of snow here in Massachusetts!
Tom D. surely knows. Anyway, so many great descriptions of God! How good is

Hildegard's! I really like Evelyn Underhill's. Sometimes we are buried by our own devotions. I need to read more of her. I agree with Susan B. You so enrich our lives!

REPLY

Marilyn Greene March 4, 2019 at 8:17 am



New to blog
Grateful to partake in faith filled encouragement
Coping with cancer treatment
Thank you

REPLY

Delores March 4, 2019 at 5:32 pm



I have gone through cancer treatment, and know how difficult it can be. I will pray for you, that God's healing love may embrace you each day.

REPLY

Pete March 4, 2019 at 8:36 am



Thank you Sr. Melanie, I printed all 20 of the quotes. To be reread at different times. I also thank you for the March 1st reflection in "Give Us This Day". When I finish with March, I will take that page out. That's what friends do!

REPLY

Rosemary March 4, 2019 at 8:44 am



Good Morning Melannie and blog friends,
There is abundant food for my soul in each of your quotes. Here's another: "Friends are God's way of taking really good care of us." Thank you and bless you, Melannie and blog friends!

REPLY

Terri Butel March 4, 2019 at 8:59 am



Dear Sr. Melannie,

I so look forward to “Melannie Mondays” – thank you!
I am adding many of these to my quotation spreadsheet, but this morning I particularly appreciate #20.
Here is one of the quotes from my favorites:
“There are no more lines of separation, only strands of connectedness. My eyes find holiness everywhere, in every living thing, person, in every act of kindness, act of nature, act of grace. Everywhere I look, there is God, looking back.” Jan Phillips

REPLY

Mary Alice Teller March 4, 2019 at 9:02 am



Another God quote: “I found god in myself and I loved her fiercely.” from the play “for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf,” by Ntozake Shange

REPLY

Mary Ellen March 4, 2019 at 9:11 am



Sister thank you for sharing these beautiful quotes. Much to ponder during my prayer time. Blessings.

REPLY

Barbara March 4, 2019 at 9:25 am



Thank you Sister Melannie. #13 is my favorite today. I am working on a lenten practice. I am putting together small squares of paper with lots of thoughts and folding them and putting in a glass jar. When I start my meditation for the day I will reach in and take one out and see what inspiration I can acquire.

REPLY

Linda March 4, 2019 at 12:22 pm



Barbara,
I love this idea; thank you!

REPLY

Eloise March 4, 2019 at 9:46 am



Thank you, Sister Melanie. I so appreciate beginning my week with you.

There is nothing I can do to make God love me more. There is nothing I can do to make God love me less.

REPLY

Patty March 4, 2019 at 10:23 am



Thank you, Sister. I especially liked #11.

REPLY

Jean March 4, 2019 at 11:32 am



Good Monday Morning Sister Melannie,
Thank you for another inspiring Monday and a fantastic beginning to Lent.
Always look forward to your Monday thoughts, words and song.

REPLY

Debra Tomaselli March 4, 2019 at 11:59 am



Thank you Sister! All these quotes resonate with me...but #16 is so spot-on it made me laugh!! (God is like a person who clears his throat while hiding...) I love the analogy! And find it to be so true...Everywhere I look...God is...

REPLY

Sr. Marietta March 4, 2019 at 12:06 pm



Number 20 is my favorite one—the one about the honey bee says it all for me. Thanks, Sr. Marietta

REPLY

Carolyn March 4, 2019 at 12:55 pm



The song at the end...HOW GREAT THOU ART!! It says everything. Thanks for the sharing...

REPLY

Kathleen Bogart March 4, 2019 at 1:25 pm



Thank you for #17. For years I have been trying to explain me within #17, to friends, Family and my pastor. They only heard that I raged against God and nothing else.

You validated my experience with God.

Thank you so very much.

REPLY

Kathleen Magiera March 4, 2019 at 2:37 pm



Thank you for the Thomas Merton quote: mercy within mercy within mercy.

A great way to start Lent!

Kathleen

REPLY

Bobbi March 4, 2019 at 5:15 pm



He is my Hiding Place. :). Thanks for the song. Xoxoxo

REPLY

denise March 4, 2019 at 6:43 pm



I loved #11...it reminds me I do not invite God into my life. My life came from God and He is already there inviting me to join Him. My life has a plan that was created just for me by my God. It makes everything that happens very personal and purpose filled. I am less apt to be so afraid of life if I meditate on this quote. Just lean in and look for the hand of God in every moment of this life.

REPLY

Michelle Rabb March 5, 2019 at 12:03 pm



Dearest Melannie: Thank you! #16 has been written in my daily devotional for many years. Your post is so perfect a reflection for our Lenten journey. You bless me so. I am so very grateful! M.

REPLY

Tom March 5, 2019 at 4:30 pm



I liked #6 the best: short, with a clever twist.

My God is "the one who takes delight in me."

REPLY

Peggie March 6, 2019 at 11:43 am



Oh..I do love 16 and 17. I often do these things and I know, for certain, after I finish my tirade, I am taken into loving arms and consoled...as any parent would do. Hmm. LOVE....so.....here!

REPLY

Barbara March 7, 2019 at 2:18 pm



A perfect Lenten reflection! How great is our God! Today's song is my very favourite and I love your meditation, Sr. Melanie. I am adding your post to my Facebook page. I feel it should be sheared. Thank you for your weekly inspirational posts.

REPLY

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