

## The Thoughts Of God

Priests and theologians try to talk about God, and this means that they try to enter into the mind of God. This is dangerous ground, because we are out of our depth, height, and breadth in even attempting it. Whatever we say will fall so far short of the truth, that it will scarcely be worth your attention. It's like interviewing your goldfish on the subject of the Special Theory of Relativity: all you get is a small string of bubbles.

### No Room For Inquisitions!

This is the reason why I think inquisitions and heresy-hunts are so wrong. They fail in humility, forgetting the truth that all human words are inadequate to the mystery of God's mind. It is true that some theories about God are damaging and lead on to inhuman and even sinful behaviour. It's important for the Church to say so. For instance, believing that there are many different Gods is not something Christians can accept: not only because we believe in the revelation of the One God revered by the Jews, and especially by Jesus: but also because believing in many Gods introduces division, conflict, and possible warfare at the very summit of being. The God of Peace reigns over a unified cosmos because he is One, and all that he has made belongs to one intention and is resolved in one mind. We betray our ignorance of this when we introduce war and persecution into God's world, most especially when we claim to do it in his name.

### God Reveals His Mind

The only person who is allowed to speak about God with authority is clearly God himself. But if you're an Inquisitor, you may well complain about the way he does this. Instead of publishing a plainly-worded Catechism that tells everybody the answers to their 101 most frequently-asked questions, God uses human beings, with all their difficulties and shortcomings, to carry his message to the human world. He inspires prophets, and gives them the urge to communicate their notions to the rest of us. At the climax of all these communications is

the appearance in the tangle of human history of Jesus, the Son of God himself. But even he writes nothing down, and seldom makes doctrinal statements. Instead, he tells stories, leaving us to supply their meaning and catch his drift. More and more we gain the impression that the real message of God is the actual person he sends: Jesus *is* the Word of God. When we have him, we have the message; when we lose him or forget him, we lose touch with the truth, and with God.

### “To Learn From God Is To Come To Me.”

Jesus says that about himself in John's Gospel. He knew he was uniquely important for everyone. Yet he didn't apply to Tiberius Caesar for access to the imperial postal system. He sat with a few people talking on the hillsides and market-places of an obscure province on the margins of the Empire. The largest crowd he ever addressed was a drop in the ocean of humanity. He must have known that his mission was dependent on the most tenuous system of communication - the words of his hearers. If he'd wanted us to go around persecuting one another on matters of faith, would he not have made this very clear? Given the way he actually chose, isn't it clear that he wanted to trust human beings and their ways of receiving him? Christians don't conform to a theory: they welcome a person, Christ. We must never forget that we are friends of Christ, to whom he has made known all that he has learned from the Father. All the formularies of the faith can't substitute for that friendship, that sharing our lives with Jesus which we call prayer, and our welcoming one another in his name.

### The Way Of God

Like the workers in the vineyard, we find God annoying and by our standards sometimes unjust. Needless to say, it is always our poor understanding of truth and justice that is at fault. If we can only have the humility to wait on God and to trust him, before we sail into war, there is still hope that the world may be healed, and saved from those ideas of ours, that always end in tears. *Fr Philip*