

*The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw — and knew I saw — all things in God and God in all things (Mechtild of Magdeburg, 1210-1280).*

A now rather famous story has been told about St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta who is known for her work among the poor: A well dressed man noticed her as she cleaned the wounds of another man who suffered with an advanced case of leprosy. Repulsed by the open weeping sores, and I suppose also by the smell, he exclaimed "I wouldn't do that for a million dollars" to which Mother Teresa replied "Neither would I. But I would gladly do it for Christ." Like Mechtild, Mother Teresa saw the man with different eyes. She had come to see with, and through, the eyes of Christ; or as St Paul says, with the eyes of the heart (*Ephesians 1:18*).

But how are we, regular people who are not saints like Paul and Mechtild and Mother Teresa, supposed to develop such eyes? Scripture tells us that such eyes can come only by grace; that *God is love*; and that *we are able to love because God first loves us* (*1 John 4:16-19*). Our love for God, and for others, is a response to God's great love for us. Like children who learn from their parents, we only learn to love by watching how God loves us. Certainly, we can do that by watching those godly persons whom God has placed in our own lives as well as by reading scripture and learning about the saints who have gone before us.

One might also try a particular prayer practice suggested by St. Ignatius of Loyola in his manual, *The Spiritual Exercises*:

For this exercise Ignatius suggests that you enter into a period of quiet prayer, first consciously recognizing that you are about to spend time with someone who knows and loves you intimately. This loved one has been longing and searching for you and is delighted to have found you. Now you are to imagine how God (this one who loves you so deeply) is gazing upon you in wonder; and with delight and admiration. Sit quietly under that gaze; do nothing. Simply allow yourself to bask in the presence of God; rest under the gaze of this One who adores you; and soak up the love of God as it warms your own heart. The following poem may be helpful as you prepare to sit with God in this way:

### **Let Your God Love You**

Be silent.  
Be still.  
Alone  
Empty  
Before your God  
Say nothing.  
Ask nothing.  
Be silent.  
Let your God look upon you.  
That is all.  
God knows.  
God understands.  
God loves you with an enormous love.  
And only wants to look upon you with that love.  
Quiet.  
Still.  
Be.  
Let your God —  
Love you.

(Edwina Gateley)

*Elizabeth Goodine, Spiritual Director*