

IMAGE AND LIKENESS

When am I most the image and likeness of God?

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We all know that we were made in the image and likeness of God.

But think about the question Fr. Pat Griffin asked retreatants in his closing conference at a recent retreat. “When do I most experience myself as made in God’s image and likeness?”

I was amazed as he unpacked the short 9 verses of Psalm 113 to discover this psalm is probably one of the earliest statements of the “preferential option for the poor.”

The first six verses set the stage for the answer to the question when do the servants of Lord live out what it means to be the image and likeness of the Lord. All Servants of the Lord are called to praise the Lord who is high above even the heavens, greater than anything we can imagine.

The concluding verses spell out that it is this God above all gods who reaches down in the dung hill (there are more graphic expressions) to raise the lowly from the dust. Not only does God lift them up but also seats them with the princes. God does not only call them to life but to the fullness of life with the princes. God doesn’t merely offer bleacher seats but ringside seats!

Mary understood. “The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.” (Lk 1:53-53)

Vincent understood. “The Poor are our Lords and Masters!”

No wonder Vincent writes “We cannot better assure our eternal happiness than by living and dying in the service of the poor, in the arms of Providence, and with genuine renouncement of ourselves in order to follow Jesus. ” (VdP, CCD3, L. 1078, p. 384)

That is how we live out being the image and likeness of the God who reaches down to lift us up.

We praise and serve the Lord when we raise up the lowly...the poor.

What difference does that make in how I look at myself...and others?

