

Peter ŠAJDA

# The Very Same Eye: A Baptismal Meditation

*The mediæval Dominican theologian Meister ECKHART (1260–1328) wrote in one of his sermons the following words: “The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me.” The very same eye.*

## I. God’s Ubiquity

When people think of God, they often imagine that “I am here” and “God is there”. “I am here on Earth” – “God is there in Heaven”. “I am here in my sin” – “God is there in God’s glory”. “I am here in my daily worries” – “God is there in God’s eternal happiness”.

And from this way of thinking arises the strange idea of God’s absence. This idea prompts us sometimes to say: “God was not there for me when I needed God the most.” Or when evil things happen, people tend to ask: “Where was God?”

All these statements and questions treat God as an object. An object like a tree or a house – something outside of me. And this object-god can be present or absent – we can see God or God can hide.

But Meister ECKHART challenges us to a deeper understanding of God: “The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me.” There is no subject and object, no here and there.

ECKHART asks us to take God’s ubiquity seriously. He calls for a permanent consciousness of God’s deep closeness – closeness which comes not only from outside, but always also from inside.



## II. Closer to Me than Myself

Saint AUGUSTINE of Hippo (354–430) expressed this closeness with his famous sentence: “*Deus interior intimo meo*” – “God is closer to me than myself.” And a friend of mine once coined the sentence that God is closer to us than our own skin. This closeness is so strong that we can never truly shake it off – not even in denying God.

It would, however, be sad to merely recognise God’s closeness as an objective fact. It is much more than a simple fact: it is an encouragement and a task. An encouragement, because no-one can ever take away from us this source of strength. And a task, because we need to live it out – for the sake of our own happiness.

Although this closeness of God is a deeply personal matter, it is at this deep level that all humanity is connected. And with regard to Jesus Christ – the whole Church is connected. Our bond with humanity and with the Church lies deep down in our soul. There is where we are most connected to God.

## III. How can I See God?

When we participate in a baptism, we are called to renew our connection to God, the Church and our fellow humans. To renew our consciousness of God’s presence and closeness, as a community of those who have personal experience with it.

And if we manage to continually deepen this experience, we will certainly be brave enough to face the baptised child’s questions when the child becomes older. Who knows, maybe one day the child will come to us and ask: “Tell me, how can I see God?”

Daniel PASTIRČÁK

# The Eternity Tale

*Life was an island for him. No one arrived, and he walked out towards no one. Along the seaside, fringed by the foam of the waves, he had met only his own footprints for many years.*

*Any former life seemed to him the storytelling of old women. It was as if it were not him at all: a young man zealously climbing up the social ladder. How many bitter apples had he begun to bite before understanding that the world upon which the civilization of his ancestors stood was a tapestry woven of squandered illusions? Was there really emptiness behind that web?*

He was never really sure if he sailed here over the real sea. Perhaps he had not discovered this island in the ocean at all, but rather, in the bottom of his heart, into which he was descending, step by step, with his continuing meditations. More and more he had become convinced that out there, there was no real world at all. Only consciousness existed. Absolutely dimensionless, it created only inklings with pictures. So, like a little boy playing with bubbles, he would fashion the world into a large glittering orb. He would let it float into empty space and then, after all, would break it so that he might create it again. “Only my self really exists.” In this thought, the man found peace.

Now, if this island actually existed, it would be quite small: a coral ringlet crowned with garlands of virgin forest whose shore a man could circle in a single day.

On the eastern side of the island, atop a ridge rising out of the sea, the man had built a rustic temple of heavy stone. In this temple, which he had consecrated to the God-of-the-Self-Most-High, he sat, all day long, casting his eyes over the flickering flame of a candle.

The roar of the sea beneath him and the tedious tunes that he played upon his reed carried his mind into a trance. In the midst of this trance all was clear to him. He felt as if the smallest cells of his