

I recently accompanied our eighth grade on their class trip. We went to Chicago for a day. Air fares are quite low from here to there. We flew up in the morning, visited 3 museums, 2 McDonalds, the Sears Tower, and the Hard Rock Cafe--then flew home that evening. It was wonderful! Our trip enriched us all, and many kids flew in a plane for the first time.

Flying is a great mystery to me. I stand on the ground, look up at those metal birds and wonder how do they do it. It amazes me that on a 747 the distance from nose to tail is so far that the plane is longer than the Wright Brothers' first flight. The mystery of flight is so complete for me that nothing destroys it. I have flown in planes; my father worked for an airline; I have friends who pilot jets. I can get as close as I want to that mystery, and the awe of my last flight is as fresh as my first.

Life brims over with mystery--the expanse of the ocean, the multitude of the stars, the sound of music, the love of a friend, the birth of a child, and the presence of God. What does mystery do? Mystery keeps us wondering even as it draws us close. Mystery is much more than just figuring out who killed Laura Palmer.

A central mystery in the Catholic Church is the Holy Trinity. God keeps us wondering even as he draws us close. God the Father created the universe; God the Son took on flesh; God the Spirit remains with us always. God is a mystery, but it's hard to imagine how God could be closer to us than He is as Trinity.

When God revealed himself to Moses on Sinai, he did so not just as an untouchable cloud, but as the reachable God of mercy and compassion, slow to anger and rich in kindness. When Jesus tells Nicodemus his mission, he explains the Father sent the Son not to condemn the world but to redeem it. God *loved* the world so much He sent His only Son. The whole point of this distant God is to be close to his people.

We need never fear drawing too close to God. God is mytery, not a trick. When you figure out a magician's trick the magic will be gone. But we will never entirely figure out God; the mystery is complete. It will take a lifetime; it will take more than a lifetime to know the Trinity. If each day of life we prayed, we'd come to know God more. If each day of life we loved, we'd come to feel God more. And at the end of life, we'd learn we still do not know God, but we could rest in certain peace that this was life lived well.