

October 15, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

One afternoon this past week, I was praying Vespers from the Liturgy of the Hours. I happened to be sitting outside in the back yard of the rectory as I was praying. It was a beautiful October day. The sun was shining, the sky was blue, and the leaves on the trees were showing their autumn colors as they rustled in the breeze. As a priest, I have an obligation to pray the Liturgy of the Hours or the "Divine Office" every day, and I usually pray the evening portion around 5:00 p.m., after I come back to St. Andrew's from my work at the Chancery of the Diocese. That little period of prayer and rest is a refreshing pause in the busy day. On this particular day, however, I noticed as I was praying that I frequently looked up at the sky. This is not unusual, of course, but I became aware of something that I do unconsciously and began to reflect upon it. I thought about the fact that the gospels tell us that when Jesus prayed, he "raised his eyes to heaven." Jesus taught us to pray to "Our Father who art in heaven." When Jesus ascended into heaven, he was lifted up and disappeared behind a cloud, and his disciples continued to stare at the sky. Heaven is God's dwelling, and although we know that heaven is not located somewhere in the sky in our universe, nevertheless, heaven is "above" so it is appropriate that we look upwards "to heaven" when we pray.

I also reflected that I was truly in a sacred place as I was praying beneath the sky because I was looking up at God's dwelling, His sanctuary. When I am in church praying, I am in God's house, his dwelling, and I am aware of the Lord's true presence in the Tabernacle. But even away from church, I am in the presence of God, and I am reminded of this whenever I raise my eyes to heaven. I share this with you today in case you may find it helpful in your own habits of prayer.

May God bless you and protect you all your days!

Your Pastor,
Msgr. Stephan Moloney