

GLIMPSE

May I Have a Menu Please?

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The seven members of our small community had to go out to dinner recently, because the automatic dishwasher, after twenty-five years, gave up the soapy ghost. Why didn't we just wash the dinner dishes by hand? We're not real good at washing or drying or being germ free. Anyway, we walked into this little place where the menu was printed in chalk on a board on the wall. I asked the waitress if that was the menu or the agenda. I sometimes enjoy confusing people, no, always I suspect.

The waitress told me I would like everything "So sit down and start filling your mouth." The name of the place was "The Mouth of the South." She was a good introduction. So what would I like, what kind of dinner did I want to fill my mouth, how hungry was I?" If an agenda was what I was dealing with, then I would have little choice, but soon enough a menu appeared with some very good choices. So back to the exercise of freedom about what I want. I wondered if I could have some of all! Agendas take away the anxiety of choice; menus increase the worries about whether we're going to get the best deal.

That night, back in my room, less anxious, but more stuffed, I found myself pondering about menus. The TV has a channel just for the menu. My computer has a menu for almost everything. Meetings can begin by the leader presenting us with a menu of ideas and procedures. We just love the freedom of choice and express our individuality by the exercise of our wills. I began a deeper reflection about just what kind of God I would like right then. I went further, does my choice of what kind of God is for me, depend, like at the "Mouth of the South", how I am, for what am I hungry at any one moment?

So here's the Divine Menu as of now, but it could change like the chalk on the wall. We can have a God Who makes everything happen, good or bad. This God is a He, who cooks up, pre-wraps reality and we eat this dish called Life.

We might be attracted to a God Who keeps a respectful distance from us and occasionally enjoys teasing or trickily, fools around with good or bad interventions.

Another menu item is the Sweet and Sour God Who is good to us when we are good and sours on us when we are less good. This God responds to us according to our behavior and we are not always sure which behaviors are good enough to please the Chef.

Ah yes, there is the smorgasbord God as well. We can choose from all kinds of aspects and traits depending on how free we want to be. We can dabble and be discreet and make sure we get exactly what we want. A little of Care, a dash of Shoulds, a dollop of sugary imagery and a huge side order of Mercy Sticks. Of course we can return for second-helpings and select differently.

Each of the seven of us chose a different item and all enjoyed what they had, but all would have liked to have tried other things. Notice? We made our choice according to what we wanted. A great exercise of the old ego it was. What kind of God we may dish up for ourselves, and many have and do, centers on what kind of God would adapt to our ego, our indulgence, and our needs.

The Christian God is not on the menu, nor is this God an agenda. It is helpful to ponder what of this God would we change if we were asked, and more personally, why! It is only a glimpse so eat well.