

Who is your god?

By Deacon Linda Bobbitt

First day of school 9-2-20

It was my first day of seminary. I left the dorm early and walked across the courtyard and into Gullixson Hall for my first class. Though the building was old, the classroom was modern with tile floors, large windows and small tables and plastic chairs. The professor, Dr. Patrick Keifert, had arranged some of the tables into a semicircle facing the front of the room. He sat quietly before them— a large man behind a small table. He smiled as we entered but made little eye contact and said not a word. The nervous energy was electric as we all found chairs, glanced at one another and at the professor. Chit-chat subsided as the last students found seats. Soon the room hushed, waiting for the professor to say something – anything.

We waited. He sat motionless, looking down at his papers. ...

When the time finally came for class to begin, he suddenly “turned on”. In a booming voice he asked, “Who is your god?”

We sat in stunned silence, eyes darting nervously toward one another. What did he mean, “who is our god”? Isn’t there only one? How can there be options?

Then other questions raced through our minds. Weren’t we all in Luther Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America? Didn’t we all have to write an entrance paper describing our faith? Hadn’t we convinced a committee of people that we had a strong faith and potential to be good pastors? Surely, he knows this. What is he looking for?

A student timidly offered a response. “Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”. The answer somehow seemed unsatisfactory to him. He brushed it off and continued to ask, “who is our god”?. The sense of despair and anxiety rose with each reply.

Finally, he shared a quote from Martin Luther, “Whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is really your God.”

Though it’s been years since seminary, that moment still haunts me. As a person of faith, it is important for me to periodically stop and reflect on who my god actually is at any given time. While I may think I worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jesus and the disciples, my actual behaviors may suggest otherwise.

So ask yourself, who is your god? In what do you *actually* put our trust when things get hard? Think about the last time you were stressed, panicked, sad, despite, or even joyous. To whom or what did you turn?

Begin to answer the question in your journal: “Who is your god – really?”. Then write down what it was like for you to write that answer in your journal. Are you comfortable with your answer when you see it in black and white?