

Archbishop Smith: Cloud Storage

This is beyond me. Accounts, documents, photos and more are now frequently stored not on paper or a computer's hard drive or a "stick" but in something called a "cloud". Does anyone know where this is? What this is? (I'll have to remember to ask a ten-year-old.) However it works, data stored in the "cloud" can be accessed by multiple devices and shared across platforms. Of course, this raises the question of data protection in the interest of privacy, so information is encrypted and passwords are created. Apparently, these clouds are only so big. But they somehow miraculously expand if I pay for more "storage". It is all rather wonderful and far beyond my capacity to grasp.

The Scripture passages we heard on Sunday bring to our awareness another kind of "cloud storage", namely, the heart of God. There we have "stored" everything about us. The capacity is infinite: "The whole world before you, O Lord, is like a speck that tips the scales, or like a morning dew that falls on the ground." (Wisdom 11:22). So, too, is the love with which it is held: "Lord, you love all things that exist." (Wisdom 11:24). No amount of encryption, no password of any complexity, can shield our "data" from God's knowledge. This, however, is no cause for anxiety, because God responds to our waywardness with tender correction and boundless mercy.

The digital cloud is invisible. The divine one has been made visible in the person of Jesus Christ. In him the heart of God is on full display. In him the infinite love and all-embracing knowledge stored in that "cloud" is openly shared across the platforms of human assumptions and prejudices, summoning us to a new way of analyzing the data that is daily before us in our interactions with others.

We see this at work in the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). Jesus awakens him to the all-embracing knowledge and all-forgiving mercy stored in God's heart, and this encounter transforms his life. It also challenges observers to dissipate their own very small "clouds" where they have kept stored the data of his occupation (tax collector) and judge him a sinner. In God's heart he is "a son of Abraham", forever the precious object of God's loving concern.

As is each of us. It may well be very difficult to pierce the clouds of cyberspace, but it is no problem at all to access our data in the heart of God. He has opened that divine cloud to full view in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The love and mercy stored therein reaches us through the sacraments of the Church. If we would give as much attention to receiving from the divine cloud as we do to filling the digital one, our lives would be forever transformed.