

How Do We Know God?

The author of the Book of Wisdom, from which our first reading comes today, asks a pretty crucial question: ‘What man indeed can know the intentions of God? Who can divine the will of the Lord?’ As St Paul says in the Letter to the Romans ‘they will not believe in [God] unless they have heard of him’. How do we know about God?

Well, speaking personally, my parents, especially my mother, started speaking to me about God and Jesus and our faith from a very early age. But I also know that from a very young age I already knew God in the sense that I had this feeling that there was someone greater than me with whom I was in dialogue in my heart. I couldn’t have put it in those words then, but I knew the one I later called ‘God’ from my own experience; what my mother told me simply enabled me to affirm and understand better what I knew in my heart.

Our parents, as the Rite of Baptism tells us, are the first and best teachers of us in the ways and truths of our faith. But they need the help of expert witnesses. I was also lucky that from an early age, I went to church and while I wasn’t conscious of paying very much attention to the sermons, I must have absorbed a lot from that in a passive kind of a way. Then there was the preparation for First Holy Communion and the learning of the truths of my faith. All these, at that time, came from my teachers in primary school, and I was later introduced to scripture and the Gospels especially in Catholic Secondary school and learned, in the sixth form, to question and debate difficult issues of faith with teachers and other students.

Our Catholic schools are crucial and irreplaceable in forming and establishing us in our faith. I am delighted that today, Education Sunday, our Headteachers will speak to us about the importance and value of our Catholic schools.