

**Small Talk – October 4 2021**  
**By Michael Small**

There are times when I am sitting at table with friends, family, perhaps members of the church. Especially after a memorial service or the death of a loved one – the conversation drifts toward “I wonder what heaven like?” Or “What happens when one dies?” Jesus clearly tells his disciples not to worry about death, saying “I have prepared a place for you!” Don’t worry. The most important thing is to live life fully, unafraid of, in fact ignoring death. In life, risk it all, do more than you than you think you can. Do more than I have. Simply, don’t worry about death – it’s all about living, life, relationships, and following in the ways of Christ.

Never-the-less I think we find ourselves in conversations where we speculate about death, wonder about the process, and ultimately wonder “What’s next?”

This past week, late at night, and looking for something to watch, I said, “Oh what the heck, the reviews have been good, and it might be interesting.” On Netflix there is a seven-part television mini-series called *Midnight Mass*. I walked into it with eyes wide open. It turns out that it is a mixture of vampires, mystery, life and death, and a small community on an isolated island, and their faith. There is actually some interesting preaching. BTW – I never watch vampire movies, let alone a seven-part series!

Spoiler Alert; I am revealing some of the ending of *Midnight Mass*. At the end, one of the main characters, Erin, is bitten. She is dying. In the moment, the last seconds of her dying, she encounters Riley, a friend who has already died. The curious dialogue below occurs with the instrumental in the background “Were you there?” –

*Riley asks: What happens . . . when we die? What happens? So, what do you think happens when we die, Erin?*

*(In the moments of Erin dying she says . . .)*

*Erin: Speaking for myself? Myself. My self. That’s the problem. That’s the whole problem with the whole thing. That word, “self.” That’s not the word. That’s not right, that isn’t . . . That isn’t! How did I forget that? When did I forget that?*

*The body stops a cell at a time, but the brain keeps firing those neurons. Little lightning bolts, like fireworks inside, and I thought I’d despair or feel afraid, but I don’t fell any of that. None of it. Because I’m too busy. I am too busy in this moment. Remembering. Of course.*

*I remember that every atom in my body was forged in a star. This matter, this body is mostly just empty space after all, and solid matter? It’s just energy vibrating very*

*slowly and there is no me. The never was. The electrons of my body mingle and dance with the electrons of the ground below me and the air I'm no longer breathing. And I remember, there is no point where any of that ends and I begin. I remember I am energy. Not memory. Not self. My name, my personality, my choices, all came after me. I was before them and I will be after, and everything else is pictures, picked up along the way. Fleeting little dreamlets printed on the tissue of my dying brain. And I am the lightening that jumps between. I am the energy firing the neurons, and I'm returning. Just by remembering, I'm returning home. And it's like a drop of water falling back in the ocean, of which it's always been a part. All things . . . a part. All of us. . . a part. You, me and my little girl, and my mother and my father, everyone who's ever been, every plant, every animal, every atom, every star, every galaxy, all of it. More galaxies in the universe than grains of sand on the beach.*

*And **that's** what we're talking about when we say "God." The one. The cosmos and its infinite dreams. We are the cosmos dreaming of itself. It's simply a dream that I think is my life, every time. But I'll forget this, I always do. I always forget my dreams.*

***But now, in this split-second, in the moment I remember, the instant I remember, I comprehend everything at once. There is no time. There is no death. Life is a dream. It's a wish. Made again and again and again and again and again and again and on into eternity. And I am all of it.***

***I am everything. I am all.***

***I am that I am.***

I share these words with you for they are provocative. They touch on the mystery of life, living, and dying. Are they true? Are they real? No matter – let's fully live life and in the end we will know.

*Midnight Mass*, if you get beyond the vampire stuff is well worth watching. In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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