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What I wish I knew before I started ... How close to the supernatural Montessori education is.

These days when we talk about the supernatural visions of zombies, ghosts, vampires and werewolves pop to mind or maybe crystals and incense and out of body experiences. But I invite you to consider how supernatural Montessori is in its Christian context and inspiration. Some of the most wonderful and 'spiritual' secular people I know are Montessorians who are truly attracted and given to Montessori education. There is something in Montessori that reaches into and speaks to the spiritual part of our lives. But unless we know and acknowledge the source of this spirituality we settle on explanations and theses that don't bring us to the full truth.

Now having said that, most of us still miss the supernatural, not only in Montessori but in our daily lives. Just as in listening for God's presence, the looking for God's presence requires the same attention and stillness. The very supernatural is at God's own heart – because He is supernatural. In 1 Kings 19:11-12, God says to Elijah, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper."

Our challenge is not to confuse the miraculous with the supernatural. Yes, it does take the supernatural to do the miraculous but if we are only looking for the miraculous (and will only be impressed by the miraculous) we will miss the continued "gentle whisper" that is in our lives – and classrooms. The miraculous primarily deals with time – with the here and now – with the parting of the sea, with the feeding of the five thousand, with healings and power. It is impressive! But the supernatural is even more awe inspiring. The supernatural leads us into the very presence of God, into

the very heart of God. And we will miss it if we only look for the miraculous. Jesus asked (Mark 8:12), "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign?" They were in the very presence of God and could not see or understand.

The supernatural is the threshold of eternity. And the work of the supernatural is the creation, the re-creation of the spiritual man – the man and woman that God had intended us to be before the fall. Dr. Montessori writes that some have likened "normalization" as unto a conversion. In "The Secret of Childhood" (pg.141) she writes, "...yet this term (conversion) emphasized the spiritual character of the remarkable phenomenon that was apparent to all. The children had experienced a spiritual renewal which freed them from sorrow and abandonment and gave them a new birth of joy. If we take sin and sadness as a kind of alienation from a more perfect state, then the recovery of this state implies conversion. Sin and sadness then yield to joy."

We are present daily at the ongoing work of grace in our children's lives. The miraculous is quick. The supernatural works slowly transforming, transcending nature. Loving God, trusting God, serving God is a slow process of discovery – occupying a lifetime. God is in no hurry He has eternity and He shares it with us. Christianity is a supernatural religion. It does not lend itself to being dissected and explained to skeptics' satisfaction. Yet, its product – loving a God you do not see, serving Him by serving others, laying your life down, restraining your impulses, learning to love others and beyond all – loving your enemies can only be accomplished in the supernatural realm.

Many schools have everyone remove their shoes before entering the environment. There is a more profound reason to do so figuratively – it is holy ground. Your environment is truly a threshold of eternity.