



## **Rector's Essay - Being There**

By Jarrett Kerbel (04/17/26)

A long lingering morning in a coffee shop with a good book and a mug of black coffee was a highlight of my week in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Even on vacation, I am a morning person. Up and at 'em, I leave the house before anyone else is stirring, walk a few blocks and find a good seat at Betterday Coffee on Alameda Avenue in Santa Fe. Nondescript and nestled with minimal signage in a strip mall that has seen better days, the cafe is bustling with a cast of local Santa Fe hipsters and eccentrics.

With my head down in my book and my handy pencil underlining chunks of text, I did not see the man approach me before he said, "That is one serious looking book. What are you reading?"

Somewhat bashfully, I replied by showing him the cover of my book: The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth by David Bentley Hart. My gut went tight anticipating the ridicule that comes with a lifetime of theological nerdiness. Instead, the stranger said cheerfully, "I love that author! Have you read his book The Atheist Delusion?" Yes, I answer, and we are off and running.

Turns out this gentleman is an Episcopalian who spends his summers in Southwest Harbor! We gabbed about theology for a while and then another man approached.

The second man asked to see my book and I shared it with him. To my utter astonishment, he also knew the author and the book and he too was an Episcopalian. This man was an Episcopalian from Austin, Texas, who is moving to Santa Fe, New Mexico. After another theological gabfest, I recommended that he and his wife try out St. Bede's "In the Weeds" Episcopal Church on St. Michael's Drive.

After we parted ways, I texted my wife, “I am exactly where I need to be today!”  
Somehow God had providentially arranged the most unexpected and delightful day of  
encouraging connections with fellow travelers in the faith. Thanks be to God.  
Expect to find me nose down in a local coffee shop near you!