Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles

1 Cor 15:1-8; Jn 14:6-14

The claims of the church for Jesus rest on the belief that he is the “visible face of the invisible God” (Col 1:15 and Heb 1:4). Jesus makes this claim in today’s Gospel when Philip asks him to show them the Father: “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip?” He has revealed to them the divine image and likeness all during his ministry. This is what a human being was created to be, he argued, because this is what God is like.

After his ministry and death at the hands of both the Sanhedrin and Roman establishments, Jesus rises from the dead to reveal God’s mercy and desire that humanity be reconciled to advance to the next stage of human destiny-- life with God in the new creation and the Beloved Community. The Apostles are being sent to witness to this plan and to demonstrate its power by also living as models of the divine image.

Paul’s encounter with the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus convinced him that the crucified Jesus was with God as Son and messiah and that the church was sent to reveal and model his human and divine identity as risen from the dead. Paul proclaims the tradition of risen appearances to Cephas and the Twelve, to a large group of over 500 men and women (Pentecost?), to all the Apostles and to James, and then to him “as one abnormally born” (1 Cor 15:8).

These encounters with Jesus after his death, described in greater detail in the Gospels, formed the basis for the Easter Event, the unexpected and mind-bending revelations that continued whenever the church gathered to celebrate the Eucharist, delving into the Scriptures and breaking the bread. Jesus was alive and, even more, he was God come among his people to show them the way to live to transform themselves and the world.

We are the latest embodiment of this transformative movement, encountering Jesus is our shared liturgies and, most importantly, in our living encounters with the risen Christ in our personal and communal lives. Jesus, the risen Stranger, appears to us in our service of one another, especially the poor, and in our efforts to bring God's justice, mercy and reconciliation into our world.

We are today's Easter people, unafraid to live as Jesus did, even to lay down our lives for others, knowing this is the path to even greater Life in God. By baptism, we bear the image of God, the key to both a full human life and to our destiny after this life in the company of God and one another.

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