

May 18, 2014 – 5th Sunday of Easter – Year A
Seeing God Through Jesus

Since we have spent some time this last year emphasizing the Bible in our liturgies and in *Generations of Faith* I have a little Bible quiz for us.

How did Moses first meet God? (burning bush).

Where did God speak to Moses and give Moses the 10 Commandments
 (atop Mt. Sinai)

How did God speak to Joseph, one of the 12 sons of Jacob? (dreams)

How did God talk to Abraham and Sarah at their tent in the desert?
 (three angels)

In the Old Testament God, who is a spirit, used various ways to communicate with us human beings.

God spoke to people.

God used dreams.

God used angels - all to deliver messages.

As we can learn from reading the prophetic books in the Old Testament, God's message was often forgotten.

The people reverted to worshipping various other gods,
 just like the other nations did;

the people reverted to unjust treatment of their neighbors,
 just like the other people did.

Yes, people violated God's two key commandments:

Love God

Love your neighbor.

God created us out of love.

God wanted to have a relationship with us.

God decided that the best way to communicate with us was to send

- someone with whom we could relate more easily

- someone we could see, hear, touch and feel.

That someone was Jesus.

With the coming of Jesus we see God relating to us in a dramatically different way.

God, who has a spiritual nature, has God the Son take on a human nature by being born of Mary, Mother of God, and the Holy Spirit.

God sent Jesus, someone with who we could relate, because we could see Jesus smile, and cry, and hurt, and die ... just like us.

Here's a sketch to help make the point.

There is a triangle to show God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit),
a stick person to show Jesus,
and many stick persons to show all the people of all times.

The point of today's Gospel is:

Jesus explained that when we see Jesus we can really see,
we can understand what God is like even though God is a spirit.

We can think of Jesus as:

A bridge

A portal

A doorway

From the tangible life we live

To the spiritual life in God.

Just think of the way God made us with our five senses.

Our senses can be a bridge from our body to our mind, our imagination and the spiritual dimension of our lives.

Our taste buds can savor a fine Italian meal, a lasagna or other pasta, and we can imagine some scene from a TV commercial or movie about some place in Italy.

Our ears can hear music that can transport us to another place or time - perhaps a joyful time, perhaps sadness at the death of a dear one, perhaps a patriotic fervor with "God Bless America", perhaps to a sacred time and place with "Amazing Grace".

And so it is with Jesus and his words given to us in Scriptures.

His description of the Good Shepherd can take us to a sacred, spiritual comfort zone.

His story of the Good Samaritan can grasp our consciences and make us review how we are treating our neighbors.

His death on the cross can overwhelm our senses as we see how powerful God's love is for us.

Yes, we, these stick persons in the sketch, can see and feel through Jesus some of the great mysteries of the God who made us.

"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

Yes, Jesus, and we like what we see!

But, will we, like the people of the Old Testament, soon forget?

I sure hope not!

What can we do to keep open the portal, the doorway between us, the stick persons, and our great God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

The answers are not all that radical:

Time with the Lord

Prayer with the Lord

What might be a bit more challenging is implementing those two simple acts: time and prayer.

Let me encourage us today to try some changes.

We modern Americans are get quite adept at multiplexing, that is, doing more than one thing at a time.

We listen to the radio while we are driving.

For years I have told people of my wife's super multiplexing:

- Watching TV
- Reading the newspaper
- Making supper
- Taking care of four kids

Well, how about taking multiplexing to a new and higher level?

- Can we pray while we are washing dishes?
- Can we pray while we are mowing the lawn? -- while we are outside with the beauty of nature all around us!
- Can we pray while we are sorting and folding the clean laundry?

So those are some multiplexing ideas.

Here's the opposite extreme - turning off the outside world for awhile.

- Close the door to our bedroom, turn off the media and just take time with the Lord - a prayer book, a Bible, a rosary, a blank page in a notebook to journal ideas from the Lord.
- You can up the ante by making this a part of your routine: weekly or even daily
- Get away for a day or a weekend to a retreat at one of the retreat houses in the area. You deserve a break! God deserves your time!

Ok, fellow stick persons, let us take a moment to just let Jesus open that doorway to God.

Let's walk in.

Let's figure out how to spend more time there.

Christ in me, Arise!

