

## 5th Sunday Easter 2020 A Reflection

Each year during the last weeks of the Easter Season the Gospels draw on Jesus' Farewell Discourse at the Last Supper and they have similar themes: that Jesus, while returning to his Father, will remain with his disciples down through the ages, and that at his departure the Father will send the Holy Spirit to deepen the bond between Jesus and those who believe in him.

In today's Gospel Jesus tells his disciples that although he is returning to the Father he will remain with them as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Philip then asks Jesus to show him the Father. It is Jesus' response to Philip that I want to reflect on this morning: 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"?"

Jesus' reply to Philip, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" reminds us, as Emeritus Pope Benedict said in a General Audience, that "Jesus ... does not merely speak of the Father but [he] is the Revelation of God." How can Jesus be the revelation of God? It is because he is God that he reveals God. We only know Jesus when we can say with Thomas Jesus, my Lord and my God.

The only Son has made the Father known through his humanity. As the first Preface of the Nativity of the Lord puts it: "in the mystery of the Word made flesh ... we recognise in him [Jesus] God made visible." Because the Word became flesh and dwelt among us we can say that God has a human face. It is Jesus. The *Catechism* puts it strikingly, "Christ's whole earthly life - his words and deeds, his silences and sufferings, indeed his manner of being and speaking - is Revelation of the Father. Jesus can say: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.""

Rightly, we contemplate Jesus as casting light on ourselves, that Jesus "reveals humankind to itself." In the words of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council, "It is "only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of humankind truly becomes clear." Jesus, as man, teaches us how to live in a fallen world, how to relate to each other and to his heavenly Father.

But such is the mystery of Jesus that he, as Word made flesh, reveals the Father. Thus Jesus' reply to Philip, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father," reminds us that while Jesus in his humanity, as true man, reveals to us our true selves, who we are called to be, it is in his divinity, as true God, he reveals the Father, and indeed reveals the Holy Spirit as the Gift of the Father and the Son. And as the *Catechism* has reminded us Jesus' "whole earthly life" revealed the Father.

In the season of Easter in contemplating Jesus' death and resurrection we also contemplate the Father and his love for us his wayward children revealed in Jesus, the human face of God.

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