

5th S. of Easter, Yr. A.

14-5-17.

Let us see the Father.

The book I use for daily meditations begins today's reflection with a story about German philosopher Karl Barth. It mentioned that at one stage, when he was lecturing, one of his students asked him a question: "Sir, don't you think that God revealed himself in other religions as well, and not only in Christianity?" Barth's answer stunned the audience. "No, God has not revealed himself in any religion, including Christianity. He has revealed himself in his Son."

It's stunning observation, and it is true. It is in Jesus that we see God present. It is in Jesus that the Father is revealed. Christianity is what has grown out of that revelation, but if we don't keep our eyes on Jesus, Christianity, and Catholicism, for that matter, is an empty shell.

That's why, in today's Gospel, Jesus' response to Philip's request: "Let us see the Father, and we shall be satisfied", is so significant. Jesus answers: "Philip, have I been with you all this time, and you still do not know me? To have seen me is to have seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself; it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me."

As you may have noticed in today's Bulletin, that last Sunday evening we had the final meeting of our current RCIA Journey to Easter. One of the most important aspects of every meeting is a re-reading of the Gospel of that Sunday, followed by a reflection and discussion on what we have learnt about and from Jesus, - for it is the development of a personal, living relationship with Jesus, that is the most important part of the Journey to Easter. Without that relationship, their becoming Catholic is no more than another bum on a seat, and that won't last for very long.

Each of us needs to nourish our relationship with Jesus, so we can truly come to know the Father and his goodness and love for each one of us. Without getting to know Jesus, in all aspects of his life, but especially his acceptance of its negative aspects, such as the misunderstanding and

refusal to believe in him by the official representatives of religion, the betrayal by one of his own disciples, and his suffering and death on trumped-up charges, - we cannot begin to understand God's response to the suffering and challenging aspects of our own lives.

That's why Jesus has left us the Church, not as a religion, but as a community of disciples, so that we could come together; - to read, to listen and reflect together on what Jesus has taught and shown us, and to be nourished through the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, where we experience his self- and life-giving presence as no other way can. And we need that mutual support which being an active member of the Church brings us.

This weekend we celebrate Mothers' Day, a day in which we pay tribute to the central and positive role a mother plays in the heart of a family, - at least, that's what we hope and pray is the experience of each and every family.

But it doesn't always happen that way. For a variety of reasons, which can be too hurtful to mention, there are mothers who haven't been equal to that role, who've lacked support, understanding and appreciation, to respond in ways that are like second nature to the greater majority of mothers. Not being loved in and for themselves, for example, has a distorting influence on each person, and mothers are not exempt from this.

The same applies to ourselves in our relationship with God our Father. We need the support and the insights given to others to understand and live out that relationship to the full, - for each one of us is, and can be, an expression of God's love for others as well as ourselves, but if we are too focused on ourselves in selfish ways, instead of on Jesus, the very support we need, and can give, is undermined.

Having said that much, let's show our gratitude to the mothers who gave us birth, by placing either a flower or sprig of rosemary in the baskets before the altar, which will then be included in the offering of the bread and wine, dedicating our lives to the service of God and to those who deserve and who need our love. The first collection will then follow.