

Homily: May 3, 2022

By Fr. Virgil Petermeier, osc

Today we celebrate two apostles, Philip and James. They struggled to really know and believe that Jesus was a true man of God – both human and divine. They gradually grew into being announcers of the Good News. We, too, struggle to believe their good news and let it determine our lives. And so we call out, Lord have mercy.”

Jesus made the plain statement to Philip: “If you know me, then you will also know my Father.” However, we see how hard it was for the apostles to wrap their heads around Jesus’ key idea, that seeing a totally loving human being like Jesus, was seeing God. The religious leaders of Jesus’ time considered such a statement blasphemy.

We are baptized into the Risen Christ. We have become one with Christ. After the resurrection, Jesus’ hope is that we become his mystical body. In other words, when we see Jesus’ mystical body, the church, we should be seeing something of God.

As I was reading the last part of today’s Gospel, I realized that way Jesus describes himself is supposed to be true about us as well, since we are baptized into Christ. Yes, there is a large exception. We are imperfect human beings. We are not totally loving as Jesus was. Yet, what Jesus says about his identity is something we must strive to be.

Let’s review Jesus’ wonderful and truly awesome words once again.

“The Father who dwells in me is doing his works.” St. Paul made a similar statement about himself, namely, that the good he does is Christ working in him. So it is with us. The loving things we do are really God and his Holy Spirit working through us. Do you and I really believe this?

Jesus also said, “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” We Crosiers say, as our spiritual father, St. Augustine, said, “we go together into God.” We are in God, but we keep going deeper and deeper into God. In other words, we go deeper and deeper into love, which is God.

These are utterly important statements by Jesus about himself and about us.

God's divine spirit lives in us. That's why St. Paul also said, "We are temples of the Holy Spirit." Do you and I really consider ourselves temples of God's Holy Spirit?

Finally, Jesus also said about himself, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." Because of our baptism, we must realize that our thoughts, words and deeds ought to help others get a glimpse of God when they hear us speak, witness our attitudes and see us act. May our being magnify and glorify the Lord. Our mother, Mary, said that of herself, too, and she helps and inspires us to do so now.

May we realize and respect ourselves and one another as God's amazing beings with an amazing mission.