



Bringing Home the Word

Fifth Sunday of Easter (A)

May 7, 2023

What Is God Really Like?

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

That is a very profound question, asked by children and adults alike. Answers range from the image of an old man in a white robe with a beard; the all-seeing eye on the back of the dollar bill; “the big guy up there.” Such answers seem frivolous when we think about the dynamic force behind the Big Bang from which evolved everything in the billions of galaxies that we know exist. What is such a God really like?

The disciples were probably not thinking of astrophysics when they asked Jesus about God. Their questions

flowed from Jesus’ constant reference to God as “Father.” That title in itself tells us something about God. It tells us that God, like a father, is the source of Jesus’ being and existence.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples that he is about to return to his Father. He also assures them that they also will have a place with the Father. However, like us, they still are not sure what this Father is like. Jesus responds to their lack of understanding and suggests: “Look at me!” His life is lived for others. He is one who cares for those in need rather than walks past them, who forgives rather than condemns, who endures misunderstanding without retaliating, who tolerates the pettiness of others without being snide. Why is it so hard for us to realize that this is what God is really like?

The disciples want to know what God is like. Jesus says, “Look at me!” †

Sunday Readings

Acts 6:1-7

The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly.

1 Peter 2:4-9

Come to him, a living stone...and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house.

John 14:1-12

Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

**Want to see God?
Observe Jesus.**



A Word from Pope Francis

One could summarize the diaconal spirituality...of service... ready to say yes, docile, without making life revolve around one’s own agenda; and...looking at everyone, especially those left out, those who feel excluded.... To receive not only the needy, but those who have pain.... I entrust this to you.

ADDRESS TO THE PERMANENT DEACONS OF THE DIOCESE OF ROME, JUNE 19, 2021



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS
QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- How do I imagine God?
- How do I feel about people who think differently about God?

Ministries Grew from Needs of People

By Paige Byrne Shortal

“As the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.”

Acts 6:1

The Acts of the Apostles is the story of the early church struggling to survive its infancy. Jesus didn't leave instructions about what to do when there were Greek members and Hebrew members who came from cultures so different that communication was painfully difficult. Greek meets Jew was as much of a clash of cultures as Midwest meets Mayan. But they were all believers, all on fire with the Spirit, all filled with the excitement of participating in something new, something right and just.

**Jesus' plan for us?
Pray. Discern. Act.**

“So the twelve called together the community of the disciples



and said, 'It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to the task....'”

Acts 6:2

**The first deacons
(Diakonos: Greek for “service”)**

For a while, the ministry of deacon died out and became only a rank or stopping place on the way to priesthood.

We still have vestiges of this in the title transitional deacon. Vatican II restored the diaconate, and those we now call permanent deacons are not “mini-priests,” but men with their own unique call to service.

As the Church grew, so did the need for people with different gifts to minister to the community. While the early Church was a small group of outlaws, worshiping in secret for fear of their lives, there wasn't much need for ministries like lector, catechist, cantor, minister of the Eucharist, greeter, or usher. Nor were there pastoral councils or commissions for finance, liturgy, social services, and education. These ministries all arose out of need as the Church grew.

The Spirit's work within the Church continues, calling men and women to ministries never imagined in the infancy of the Church. The plan remains: PRAY—fervently! DISCERN—carefully! ACT—courageously! †

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, when there is conflict within our family or community, send your Spirit to guide us to reconciliation and unity, we pray. Amen! Alleluia!

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 8–13

Monday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 14:5–18 / Jn 14:21–26

Tuesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 14:19–28 / Jn 14:27–31a

Wednesday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 15:1–6 / Jn 15:1–8

Thursday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 15:7–21 / Jn 15:9–11

Friday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 15:22–31 / Jn 15:12–17

Saturday, Easter Weekday:
Acts 16:1–10 / Jn 15:18–21

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