

Briefly Homily for Easter V A 2017

The big problem, for a lot of us, is that we stand there like Philip, complaining that we haven't seen God.

That we don't know the way, that the spiritual life is a great conundrum that we are not gifted enough to solve.

The Bible is long and difficult and sometimes weird.

Our mind wanders during sermons.

The grocery list comes to mind when we are meant to be in prayer.

We are used to quicker and more full revelation.

We are used to getting what we want,

to uncovering the secrets of the universe with a google search,

to scratching our itches pretty quick.

And so we often wish that God were like that.

O God, just show yourself! many a human has wished.

It isn't that way, Jesus says to us, as he said to Philip.

You've wrongly framed your question; the premises are mistaken.

Philip, if you've seen me, you have seen the Father.

And to us, he might say.

Coming to God is not difficult; the spiritual life takes many forms.

Your prayers may be silent, wordy, long, short.

You may feel persistent rapture or the periodic, fleeting presence of God.

The spiritual life in its many forms is simply centered on Jesus.

If you know him, you know his Father.

If you follow him, you walk the way of God.

If you are his, you are God's, and God has given God's very self to you,

on the cross, in the resurrection,

in prayer humble and lofty, and in the table at which all are welcome.

All that matters in the spiritual life is relationship with Jesus; he is the path to God.

A proper human life then, is one that is a long and loving gazing upon Jesus, a deep seeing of him that also lets us see the Father.

Such deep looking changes us and makes us Christ-like windows through which Jesus and his Father can be seen as well.

So blessed Stephen, as stones rained down upon him, looked up and saw Jesus and was moved to pray for the forgiveness of the mob that murdered him.

The seeing of Jesus made and makes all the difference.

The martyrs who faced Roman execution,

the black Christians who faced racist violence,

the regular person who rises each day and does difficult work

are all sustained by the loving gaze centered on Jesus.

And their public witness inspires others to seek his face as well.

Do not doubt then, that you have already seen God.

You might not have noticed, but you can notice.

Those who look on Jesus become windows for others to see him through.

Look around this week with sharpened vision; slow down your scanning of the landscape of life.

Who around you is looking deeply at Jesus? In them, can you see the glory of God?