

14C SML 2019
LK 10:1-12, 17-20

It's been 2000 years! Two thousand years after the factual person of Jesus Christ, how is it possible to adhere to Him?

One way is what scholars call the "rational attitude." Jesus Christ is a fact of the past, just like Napoleon and Julius Caesar. Gather all possible information that has come down to us from the past through documents and "sources." But of course, in the final evaluation, we will be certain about some of the facts, and uncertain about facts.

Another, better way, is tradition. Tradition is the most adequate, that is, the most reasonable way to attain certainty about the message of Jesus Christ. Tradition is repeating the message and emulating the lifestyle of Jesus Christ. Tradition began while Our Blessed Lord was still with us, in His bodily form, while He was preaching and teaching from 30-33 AD, on earth. At the same time Jesus was preaching and performing miracles, He gave others the authority to repeat His message and emulate His lifestyle. Today's gospel as first - hand evidence of tradition beginning while Jesus was still with us prior to His Ascension to heaven.

In today's gospel, many wanted to:

- ✓ see Jesus,
- ✓ be healed by Him,
- ✓ meet Him.

Unable to get to Jesus, and Jesus unable to get to them, Jesus sent the Twelve He had chosen, and then about 70 other disciples, in two's so they could tell people all that was happening with Jesus. The disciples returned full of enthusiasm because:

- ✓ people listened to them,
- ✓ miracles occurred,
- ✓ individuals believed,
- ✓ and lives were changed.

So what kind of face did God who became Man in Jesus Christ have for those who listened to – or even put up with – the first two sent by Jesus to the first village? They had the face and the appearance of those first two disciples. For, as they set out, Jesus had told them, “Anyone who listens to you listens to Me!” (LK 10:16)

So even when Jesus was at the height of His earthly activity, Jesus assumed an identifiable form that was not:
His voice,
His Hands;

His gestures;

but also the voices, the hands, the gestures of those who believed in Him, who were sent by Him:

- ✓ to convey His words and His message
- ✓ to reproduce His miracles
- ✓ to bring the salvation that Jesus' person brought

Tradition was then, and tradition is today, the method for reaching Jesus. Tradition is the encounter with those who believe in Him. Tradition, as valid as it was the time of Jesus, is just as valid today, where Jesus visibly appears and abides in His believers. Historically, the group of His believers is called "the church," sociologically "the people of God," ontologically (and ontologically means of its very essence) "the mysterious Body of Christ," the Church.

The energy with which Our Blessed Lord is destined to possess all history and the whole world – every single thing was placed into His hands by the Father – the energy with which He is destined to be the Lord of the world and of history is the means which He assimilates to Himself the people the Father entrusted to Him, the persons upon whom the Holy Spirit bestows the gift of faith in Him. And the people the

Father entrusted to Him, the persons upon whom the Holy Spirit bestows the gift of faith in Him, is the Church.

St. Paul understood this when he was thrown to the ground and heard a Voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (AA 9:4) Saul wasn’t persecuting Christ per se, Saul was persecuting people who believed in Him. Paul was persecuting the Church. Paul would clarify this point when he wrote to the Church in Corinth, “Though there are many of us we form a single body.” (1COR 10:17)

The Gospel records Jesus expressing this same reality when he said, “I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever remains in Me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty; but cut off from Me you can do nothing.” (JN 15:5)

Our Blessed Lord is voicing the most beautiful expression of the method of:

- ✓ the Christian message
- ✓ Truth in the flesh
- ✓ God made Man

who even after 2000 years, reaches us through a reality we can see, touch and feel. And that is the Church.

It is by encountering the Church that we quite literally meet up with Christ. To encounter the Church, we must meet up with

men and women in given surroundings. Since it is impossible to encounter the universal Church in its entirety, we meet the Church as it emerges locally, in the parish, in Medford, at St. Mary of the Lakes. This is exactly the way it happened as Jesus walked the earth, as nonbelievers met believers, two at a time.

So guess what? The onus is on each and every one of us. We are the only way unbelievers will meet Christ. They can only meet Christ through us.

So what kind of face did God who became Man in Jesus Christ have for those who listened to – or put up with – the first two sent by Jesus to the first town? They had the face and the appearance of those two disciples. Today in the town of Medford, what kind of face does God who became Man in Jesus Christ have for those who listened to – or put up with – you? The face of Christ, the appearance of Christ will be you. Keep that in mind no matter where you are, no matter who you talk to. The face of Christ, the appearance of Christ will be you.