

In the Book of Exodus, we hear of the special relationship between Moses and God. “The LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as one man speaks to another” (Ex 33:11). In time, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary and spoke to people face to face as he fulfilled the mission of establishing the kingdom here on earth. Jesus explained: “I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father (Jn 15:15). Jesus called the Apostles to establish the church to help us follow in his footsteps that we too might get a glimpse at the face of our LORD:

- Through the tradition of the church, God continues to speak to every generation. “Apostles who, by their oral preaching, by example, and by observances handed on what they had received from the lips of Christ, from living with Him, and from what He did, or what they had learned through the prompting of the Holy Spirit.” (DV 7).
- God speaks to us through Sacred Scripture. In the decades following that first oral preaching, “Apostles and apostolic men who under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit committed the message of salvation to writing” (DV 7).
- “In order to keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the Apostles left bishops as their successors, ‘handing over’ to them ‘the authority to teach in their own place.’ This sacred tradition, therefore, and Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God, from whom she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face (see 1 John 3:2)” (Dv 7).
- God continues to seek out faithful witnesses who will listen to him prayerfully and accurately pass on God’s wisdom face to face. In the lives of the saints, “God vividly manifests His presence and His face to men. He speaks to us in them, and gives us a sign of His Kingdom” (LG 50).

With a little help from the Holy Spirit, God can also use us to sow seeds that others might see and hear Jesus face to face. I recall the story of a young Franciscan priest who returned to the rectory after a Mass. He knew he had preached poorly and wondered what had happened. A little while later, a man who had been away from the church for many years, knocked on the door to say thank you. He heard exactly what he needed to hear as if God had been speaking to him face to face. He had felt like an outcast ... but the words of the priest came alive by the power of the Holy Spirit to lift this prodigal son up and help him to understand how deeply God loved him. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him” (Ps 103:12-13).