

## On Relationship with Jesus: One of the Three

As I cycled through the readings for today and reflected on them in light of last week's focus on the Holy Trinity (God, Son, Holy Spirit) I found myself landing on **one of the three (the most tangible to me)** on Jesus and what our relationship to him can be.

Rev. Jim Holland talked so well about the Trinity last Sunday, that I would put his homily on a "must read and reflect" list for those of you missed it and even for those who were there. In that homily he said:

*The Trinity is not static, but is a dynamic relationship.  
The teaching of Jesus suggests ...that God is pure relationship  
That we are part of the divine exchange, a constant giving and receiving.*

And this giving and receiving in relationship, came to a new enriched form with the arrival of Jesus. In fact, with God's reaching out to humanity in this human, **one-of-us** form, the opportunity to participate in showing and sharing the Creator's love for all life was opened up to each and everyone of us.

It is worthwhile to re-member the "history" of Yahweh's call to the people of Israel, as we heard today from Samuel which reveals the challenges God had in getting the Israelites to listen!

We heard today, in the first reading from *Samuel*, that he didn't know at first that it was Yahweh calling him, but his mentor told him just to respond with the phrase: "Speak, for your servant is listening." He did and his life was changed forever as he grew into his role as the last Judge in Israel and later as a Prophet for Kings and for all the people.

(We do not find, until we come to the life of Jesus, as reported in the gospels, the sense of a loving intimacy in relationship between the Divine and the prophets. I suspect the people were not ready...in fact they wanted a King to rule over them and when they got them for a fleeting moment in time—with Saul, David and Solomon, it brought glory and then ultimately defeat for and exile. So much depends on the receiver to listen, hear, and act on God's word/guidance.)

(In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he tries to explain what he has come to understand through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The symbol of having this measure in "clay jars" that gives us strength in times of adversity and always shining forth in the darkness.)

In Mark's gospel today, we find Jesus among his followers, teaching about the relationship of the religious laws for the Israelites (Sabbath meant for them, not they for the laws) and demonstrating the power of love (healing) that transcends all domesticated, human - made religious rules.

Jesus, by with all people, saints and sinners alike, is an example of how he fulfilled his mission to show in word and deed, God's love for all people. Jesus did not do this from a throne, or on a horse like a commander leading the troops, but by being close to those who answered his call and asked for his help.

He took this idea of *relationship*, a dramatic step forward for his followers then and for us today. In *John 14-16*, we find in what has been called Jesus' farewell address, a series of sayings that come close to what we can interpret as the intimate way, the face to face way he was with those he taught, healed and expressed what he knew of God's love.

From this approach, the concept of friendship with Jesus comes to the forefront:

*...I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.*

We know that true friendship is based on trust, on giving time to the other and wanting what is best for them.

Jesus demonstrated his trust of his disciples by making known what God had revealed to him. How did Jesus make known what God had revealed to him? By demonstrating, as he did in the fields in today's lesson- that the sabbath was made for us, we were not made for the sabbath. And in his teachings through his parables and sayings by which he reveal so much about himself as the living instrument of God's love for creation.

In other words, he explained often what he meant by what he said and did as a trusting friend would, not limiting nor editing what you would call

intimate details. Those who accepted his call heard him, not always with understanding but open to learning. And we hear in Mark how often they really needed help in getting the meaning of Jesus' messages and actions. But those who limit their role to *only being* servants will not hear nor be given the why's and wherefores of what they are to do.

**We are not called to be in the military during battle and just perform what is commanded, but to understand the purpose under the actions called for and to hold onto the core which is LOVE & COMPASSION**

Jesus, in his farewell address goes on to say to his followers:

*... You did not choose me but I chose you.*

I suspect that many of us struggle with accepting that one aspect or dimensions of our relationship with Jesus is also that of a FRIEND.

So, let us take a moment to reflect on our experience with friendships in our own lives.

Think of someone that today or even long ago that you called a best friend.

What were they like or what was it that you liked or like about your friend. (smart, funny, intelligent, supportive, sensitive etc.)

Do you remember how you came to be such good friends?  
Over time? immediate. spent a lot of time together, shared secrets  
How well did you let your friend know you?

In reading the 139 psalm we find that there are no secrets from God/Jesus/Holy Spirit and that we are loved and accepted.

In a former life, career life that is, I taught a course in the Communications Department at SUNY Albany. Several of my colleagues did as well.

We used a couple of models to help explain human relationships as a method of visually helping college students reflect on their own perceptions and developing friendships or improving interpersonal communications.

Today, when I look at those tools, I see another aspect...something about my relationship with Jesus...not only other human beings. So, I want to share this with you in the hope it might be helpful...

Look at the paper you were given and us look first at the top circle with a line across the middle. This could represent the friendship with another or the I relationship we have with Jesus. The circle at the top represents a relationship with another with a line across the middle representing the reality that you have only half the relationship to manage and can only go up to the line; the same hold for the other. In a healthy friendship most of the time you are both close to the line, communicating, spending time together, sharing etc. If you withdraw from that line and stay far away, what do you think will happen to that friendship. (it will be hard to maintain.)

The question is: where is Jesus in terms of his positioning...at the line all the time...or God...or Holy Spirit? three in one...  
Where are you? Where do you want to be? How would you get there?

Beneath the circle we see the *Johar iWindow*\* as a tool to explain some aspects of self-knowledge and awareness and how others are needed for us to truly "know" ourselves. When I reflect on the Psalm we have for today, I was reminded that Jesus also knows us through and through.

So, while this model was looking at human behaviour, and human knowledge only, it can be opened up to include the Divine and especially friendship with Jesus

Quadrant 1 OPEN - things we all know about me: obviously white, english speaker, uses hands, studied at university etc., 2 HIDDEN— there are things about me that you won't know unless I tell you. 3. BLIND —there are things about me that I don't know and am unaware of unless you tell me .4 UNKNOWN — there are things about me that you don't know and I don't know... but known to God as all quadrants are!

Why bother being open? The more open we are to ourselves to others and to God, the more we will have to offer others and discover our gifts!

When we reflect upon *Psalm 139*, we are reminded that the Divine already knows the good and bad, the beautiful and ugly about us but still, calls out to us IN LOVE to come closer and be part of the plan to bring peace, joy and a compassion into a reality for all life and we, you and me are part of that plan and have a part to play!

All we need to do is get closer to that line and spend more time with the Trinity..or with one...

Let me leave you with another line from Jesus farewell address (John 15). He calls this a commandment but I receive it from the one who demonstrated this by giving up his life for us on the cross:

***Love one another as I have loved you.***

\*The Johari Window can be further illustrated and explained in more detail by referring to *Understanding the Johari Window Model*, on the web.

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