

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, May 3rd 2013

Today's Gospel centers around one of the central mysteries of Christianity, which is the combination of the divine and the human in Jesus. Much has been written by theologians and others over the centuries trying to express this central truth of our faith.

Frankly, it's a lot to get one's head around. I sympathize with Philip in the Gospel today. Although in this account he comes off seeming like a bit of a dunce, I think he said just about what I would have said. Jesus is telling Thomas (a disciple often in need of reassurance) that he has seen the Father by seeing Jesus. So Philip pipes up and says essentially: "Great! Let's see the Father now."

After Jesus is done speaking to Philip, my guess is that he wanted to make himself so small that he could hide in one of the cracks in the wall. Jesus says, in so many words, "How can you not get it? As humans you get to see me. You can't see the Father with human eyes."

And that's hard for us humans. We are used to believing in something through visual evidence. If someone doubts that I can ride a unicycle (which is an odd talent that I have), the easiest way to turn them into a believer is to grab my unicycle and ride it for a minute or two and the skeptic is converted. Paganism developed because when phenomena like the moon rising and setting occurred, people needed some explanation such as a "god" pushing the moon around to fit with what they saw.

Jesus is saying "Grow up and get over it." You have me, a literally unique combination of the divine and the human. We humans got to witness the empty tomb and Jesus' resurrection. It is a great gift if we're willing to unwrap it.

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