

John 14:1-14^v vi

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father." I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

^v About the Gospel: John 14:1-14

The gospel reading is taken from the farewell discourse of Jesus, explaining the significance and implications of Jesus' glorification (13:31-17:26). As God's glory is revealed in Jesus' obedient suffering, so Jesus' glory will be seen in his exaltation by God. Thus, his glorification means his departure from the disciples and return to the Father.

Today's reading draws out the meaning of Jesus' departure for his disciples: it brings not separation but deeper fellowship. They will be able to abide with him always, in the body of Christ, the Christian community. Philip's request to see the Father and so be satisfied expresses the human longing for a real and intimate knowledge of God. This desire is answered in the present. Jesus is the revelation of God in words and works

^{vi} Reflection and Response

In today's gospel, we see a sublime teacher plant a seed of power. Jesus does not miss a beat with his slow students Thomas or Philip, but seizes the "teaching moment" that their questions present.

Thomas, we have seen, learns by touching physical reality -- he has a hard time understanding anything he cannot perceive through his senses.

At one level, Jesus responds to that need. When he offers Thomas a way, perhaps Thomas pictures a familiar road, perhaps the one from Bethany to Jerusalem, with this landmark here, that bend there, and those annoying rocks that puncture sandals at the three-mile mark.

Yet John Sanford points out that Jesus is also engaging in deliberate word play. When Thomas asks, "How can we know the way?" he uses the Greek word *oída* for knowing through tangible, objective knowledge. When Jesus responds "If you know (*ginosko*) me, you will know (*oída*) my Father also," he first uses the Greek word *ginosko*, which refers to knowing through experience, then the word *oída* that Thomas had originally used.

When a second question comes from Philip, Jesus allows himself a moment of honest exasperation. "Do you still not understand?" But the moment passes, and he plunges in with vigor, again teaching the student what he needs, concluding with a tremendous promise. Even the struggling students will do greater works than Christ himself. All the klutzes get an "A"...including us.

More than eavesdroppers, we too are members of "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...God's own people..." (1 Peter 2:9). That's graduating with honors.

Quietly consider:

In what ways does my knowing (experiencing) God impact what I know (believe) about God?