

Scripture for August 24, 2008

Reflection from John Surette, SJ

Cosmic Christ

Jesus said to his disciples: “Who do you say the Son of Man is?”

Some disciples said “John the Baptist.” Others said “Elijah.” Still others replied “Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Peter said “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

What about you and me, sisters and brothers? How do we respond to the question? We sometimes give a very personal response. We answer “You are my Lord” or “You are my Savior” or “You are my Redeemer” or “You are my Friend” or “You are my Brother.”

These personal answers are all focused on Jesus and me. Jesus and me...a relationship that makes us feel comfortable, secure, and warm. It is like the infant in its mother’s embrace...a safe place to be...a hiding place from all the pain of life...just Jesus and me. There is a need for this kind of relationship with Jesus for, in some ways, we are all like children needing security, needing to be embraced.



But we need to move beyond being like children who need this assuring personal relationship with Jesus. We must not get fixated on this level of relationship. There is also a social dimension to Jesus. It can be viewed as a more adult dimension. It is a dimension that is obvious to anyone who seriously reads the Gospel stories.

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Jesus is one who is passionate about the works of justice. Jesus is one who is full of energy for nurturing right relationships within the human community. Such justice, such right relationships, is what constitutes the Reign of God, a Reign that is the primary focus of Jesus' ministry. So we can answer the "Who do you say I am" question by replying: You are one who seeks passionately after justice and you invite us to do the same.

Jesus is also one who has a special place in his heart for the vulnerable, marginalized, and downpressed members of society. His delight is to be involved with such people, to ease their pain, and to champion their cause. So we can answer the "Who do you say I am" question by replying: You are one who has a preferential option for the poor and you invite us to embrace this same option.

Thus far I have spoken of two important dimensions to Jesus, the personal and the social. There is, however, another. It is a dimension that might at first sound strange to our ears. It is the cosmic dimension. It is a dimension of the Christ that is embedded in the whole of Creation. Let me explain.

We all believe that Jesus reveals God to us. We have the gospel words: "He/she who sees me sees the Father." We find God in Jesus, but are we not also called to find God in all things as well as in Jesus?

Do not all things that participate in the great mystery of existence reveal something of the Divine Mystery?

All things...have you heard the story of the big fish and the little fish? In the ocean one day a little fish came swimming high speed up to a big fish and said: "Excuse me. You are older and wiser than I am, can you tell me where I can find the Ocean?" The big fish smiled and said: "The Ocean is what you

are swimming in right now.” The little fish said: “Oh, but this is only water. What I am looking for is the ocean.” And he swam away at high speed, disappointed, and unaware that the water he was swimming in was part of the ocean.

Everyone and everything in creation speaks the Divine. We do not have to go looking for God like the little fish searching for the ocean. We live our lives within God as we experience the divine presence embedded in the whole Creation. The Divine presence that is in Jesus in a unique way is also to be found within the whole Universe.

It is the grandeur of God manifested in all things. Jesus is for us a very special mode of the Divine presence. The whole Universe is the primary mode of the Divine presence. Any person who observes any aspect of the creation can see the Creator.

Why did so many citizens of our country in 2007 oppose the plans that NASA has to shut down the Hubble telescope? I think it is because those images of stars birthing and galaxies colliding speak to us about the Creator. They evoke awe and wonder within us. They, like Jesus, reveal some aspect of the Mystery of God to us. As such they are examples of the cosmic dimension of the Christ.

So we can answer the “Who do you say I am” question by responding: You are a dimension of the whole Universe, a dimension that reveals God to us, a cosmic dimension!