

Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 18, 2018

The Rev. Webster Maughan

If you are a bit confused by Lent this, year, I don't blame you. The Solemn day that starts Lent – Ash Wednesday – fell on Valentine's day, and the Feast of the Resurrection – Easter Day – Falls on April Fool's Day. Whew! A real confusion!!

But the lessons we read during Lent don't pay any attention to that. We are still admonished to prepare for Easter – no fooling! And today's Gospel gives us a hint about that preparation. Some Greeks – Gentiles – encounter Philip, and make a simple request: "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

In many ways, that is a request we all have made at oje time or another. And I want us to think about what that means to us, 2000 years after the resurrection. But I want to give you a few examples.

We moved to Staunton about a year ago, and we were greeted by this congregation very warmly – as if we were someone special. Perhaps the fact that the Senior Warden that year was our daughter might have had something to do with that, but not everyone who welcomed us knew that. We clearly were introduced to Jesus as we made our way into this community. We got to see Jesus!

As we learned about the various ministries that work their way out into the greater community – Feeding, visiting in prison, Know Your Neighbor Event (Kyn), Living Local: Joining God, Centering Payer, Lectio Divina, Bible Study, Sunday School, just to name a few . . . express our collective understanding of "Sir, or Madam, we wish to see Jesus."

So, what can we do to follow the example of Philip and Andrew? We are already doing it! But, we are called to keep it up! To expand our reach by joining those who are ministering to the community, and show others what Jesus has done for us. That is basic evangelism . . . sharing Jesus with others.

And let us not forget our own Baptismal vows: we promise to "seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves?" And, to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" That is how we show Jesus to the Greeks, or to the Americans, or to the poor, or to prisoners, or to children, or to newcomers . . .

And by so doing, we glorify God, and make our own preparations for the celebration of the Resurrection.

Father, we would show Jesus to all who ask, and make ourselves understand what it is to “lose our life” – to let go of those things that tie us to this world, and reach for those things that connect us to God. That, too, is how we can show Jesus to others.