

## Pentecost XVI-20

*“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself....being born in human likeness....And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on the cross”.*

These magnificent words found in St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians summarize, for me, anyway, this person whom we have come to call Lord and Savior. There are innumerable depictions and understandings of who Jesus is in terms of a humble servant, and later, depicted in what is referred to as Higher Christology, emphasizing the mightiness of this young Jewish man. I want to share with this morning what I believe about this man Jesus in terms of his humanity.

Lucy and I, when I am not supplying at a church, attend St. Thomas, Windsor. Their high altar window depicts Jesus, in a dark moment, kneeling on a rock looking toward the sky. What I see there, each Sunday when I am there, is a man who realizes his total dependence upon a God whom he calls Father. His face is not striking; it is the face of a person who seems to realize and appreciate that he does not have it all together and must fall on his knees acknowledging the humility associated when one approaches the Holy in life.

There is a sense that Jesus is our icon manifesting in his life what real humanity entails. Jesus was a young person who accepted a mission, not knowing where that mission would carry him, what friends he would have, what successes he might enjoy, what difficulties and hurts he might experience. He was young and exuberant but he also had a lot to learn and experience. I do not perceive Jesus as a person who has the insights of a divine being but rather a person like you and me who strives to fulfill the person he or she believes they are called to be. Jesus struggles with real life issues; he sees people hurting, he also perceives those who abuse their privileges. He comes from a religious heritage that excludes and looks down upon people of other traditions until one day he

encounters a woman who needs his help and says to her, my task is not to be of value to you. And the woman says, even dogs eat the remains from your table and Jesus learns something. He learns that he has the great gift of being of value not only to his kind of people but all folks.

Jesus during his ministry becomes convinced that he is doing the will of his Father, and then one night they come for him, take him to court and then hang him on a cross. And Jesus asks, "Father, why have you forsaken me" and receives no answer. Later in the day, he utters some final words, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit". This young, exuberant man seems to have been forsaken and yet in the end, in the end, he breathes, "Father, your will be done".

I am very grateful for the life of this young man. He came amongst us, lived as one of us and exhibited the firm belief that in the end he and we are the beloved of God. He showed us life is not a simple journey, filled with certainty, but one that calls forth from us a willingness to engage life and always, during the journey, seek the divine guidance of a Father who is eternal. We do not have to go to a dark place, kneel down and look upward; we simply have to be willing to listen to the quiet voice of God within our soul that says, "Come unto me, all you who are burdened with life, let me comfort you and make you whole".

Amen