



## *Second Week of Lent- 3/3- Andy Otto*

### ***" Growing with God" Meditation 2: Contemplating the Gospels***

By Andy Otto

In contemplating the Gospels during Lent, take this advice to heart: Be sure to take Jesus' humanity seriously even as you reflect on his divine attributes. God took humanity seriously enough to become one of us, and we do God a disservice if we downplay what God has done in becoming human. When we use our imagination in contemplating Jesus, we trust that God's Spirit will use it to reveal something about Jesus that is important for us so that we will love him and want to follow him. The only way we can get to know another person is through revelation; the other must reveal him- or herself to us. In contemplating the Gospels, we are asking Jesus to reveal himself to us.

Jesus, as I pray with Scripture this Lent, help me to be open to the revelation of your Spirit.

—William A. Barry, SJ, in *Lenten Meditations: Growing in Friendship with God*

I am not sure why I am surprised every time I encounter someone who seems to forget Jesus' humanity. I suppose it is hard not to focus on his miracles and Resurrection. Many, though, think Jesus, since he's God incarnate, would know everything. But I believe Jesus would have had to learn his ABC's. He would have had to learn about his religious tradition just as he would have had to learn a trade from Joseph. He likely grew into a full understanding of his divine vocation.

What William Barry, SJ, is getting at in his meditation is that we must allow ourselves to encounter our God with skin—that is, in a very human way. God becoming human means our relationship truly got physical. There is no doubt that God understands my human struggles. And when I contemplate Jesus in my imagination, his humanity reveals something about my humanity. When I witness his care for the outcast, I see my own potential to love more. When I see Jesus not giving in to temptation in the desert, I discover that I too have the power not to give in to temptation.

Revelation is not angelic hosts descending upon clouds. Revelation is about discovery. As I spend time with my wife, I allow her to share herself with me and in turn I discover more about who she is. In the same way, the more time I spend with Jesus in prayer and acknowledge not just his divinity but also his humanness, Jesus will reveal more of himself to me. Our relationship will grow and deepen. This is the entire crux of the Spiritual Exercises—not to mention prayer in general! St. Ignatius knew that if we could truly see Jesus for who he was (and is), our lives would be changed. Lent is a perfect time for that to happen. Every Sunday of Lent offers Gospel readings that reveal something about Jesus and, therefore, something about us.