

April 24, 2020-Friday, Second Week of Easter

Fra Mauro

In February 1971, Apollo 14 astronauts Alan Shepherd and Edgar Mitchell collected samples of rock on the Fra Mauro formation, a crater on the moon.

The crater was named after a 15th century monk and cartographer who created what was called the “ultimate map of the world.” His map included pictures of a region’s minerals, and comments about a particular geographic area.

Little is known about Fra Mauro. Born about 1400, as a young man he traveled as a merchant and soldier throughout the Middle East. Eventually he became a Camaldolese monk at the Monastery of St. Michael on Murano Island in Venice, Italy.

As a religious, Fra Mauro had to curtail his traveling, but his interest in faraway lands never waned. He frequently quizzed returning travelers, sailors, missionaries, and pilgrims about places they had visited. Once his mapmaking skill became known, King Alfonso V of Portugal commissioned him to create a world map. The monk completed the task in 1459, but the map was lost when he sent it to Portugal. Fra Mauro died the following year while making a copy of the map for the Republic of Venice. The map was completed by a Venetian cartographer who had collaborated with Mauro in drawing the earlier map.

For many years, Mauro’s map was considered the most accurate ever made. Fra Mauro also corrected previous mapmakers’ depictions of the world. He drew Japan as an island, and didn’t make Jerusalem the center of the map.

Years later, NASA called the map surprisingly accurate, considering the information available to the monk in the 15th century.

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*Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:26-28)*

John’s Gospel is ending with a powerful statement of faith.

Throughout the Gospels, faith was terribly important to Jesus. Faith got him excited.

To be sure, Jesus got excited about someone who showed great charity.

And he got excited about someone who performed some great work of penance.

And he got excited when someone performed a great act of forgiveness.

But Jesus got *particularly* excited when he saw great faith:

- “I have not seen such great faith in all of Israel!”
- “Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.”
- “Everything is possible to one who has faith.”

If there was one thing Jesus wanted most of all, it was faith—faith in him as the Lord...faith in his work.

Would Jesus be excited with my level of faith?

Spend some quiet time with the Lord