

May 27 2020-Wednesday, Seventh Week of Easter

'After that the risen Christ appeared to James, then to all the apostles.'-1 Corinthians 15:7

'He appeared to James'

Two of the 12 apostles were names James: James, the son of Zebedee, and a partner with Peter in a fishing business; and James, son of Alphaeus, about whom little is known.

But Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, refers to a third James whom the Gospels listed as one of the “brothers” (close relatives) of Jesus.

Indications are that these close relatives didn't put much faith in Jesus during his life. When his relatives heard [what Jesus was doing] they set out to seize him, for they said, “He is out of his mind” (Mk 3:21). His brothers did not believe in him (John 7:5).

Yet, in the Church's early years, this “brother of the Lord” emerges as head of the Church of Jerusalem. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul talks about one of his visits to Jerusalem. He says, “James, Kephas, (i.e. Peter) and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas their right hands in partnership.” It is noteworthy that he mentions James first, ahead of Peter and John (members of the Twelve).

James is prominent in Acts. When Peter miraculously escapes from prison, he tells the disciples: “Go and report this to James.”

How did James, one of the “brothers” who earlier didn't believe in Jesus, make such a turnaround? In this passage from Corinthians, Paul gives a clue: His “brother” appeared to him.

Then Jesus approached and said to the disciples, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”
(Matthew 28:18)

Note that Jesus came to the disciples (“approached”). Only one other recorded time—at the end of the Transfiguration—does he “approach” the three disciples.

In both instances, Jesus is in glory.

Before the glorified Lord, we humans can only bow low and keep our distance. Jesus bridges that distance by drawing near and speaking his words of comfort and compassion.

Sometimes, I may think of Jesus ascending into heaven as though he left us—sort of like going into retirement.

But Jesus promised the disciples at the Last Supper, “I'm going away and I'm coming back to you.”

He wasn't talking about coming back after he had gone through death to the other side, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and sent his own Spirit to be with us and within us.

That is a beautiful teaching.

Jesus is able to approach us and be within us, closer than he could be with the disciples as they traveled together during his ministry.

Jesus is definitely not “retired.”

Spend some quiet time with the Lord