

Christ Church, Georgetown  
Sermon, Sunday, January 15, 2017  
The Rev. Elizabeth Keeler

I wonder if you've ever heard the story of the two taxidermists who stopped in front of a window in which a large owl was on display. They immediately started offering their critical assessment. First about the way the owl was mounted, then how its eyes weren't natural, its wings were not in the right proportion, and those messy feathers and long talons all could be improved upon. When they had finished their critique they smiled at one other, satisfied with their keen eye and expert conclusions. Just then the old bird slowly turned its head and knowingly winked at them.

Perhaps Jesus is winking at us in Epiphany, patiently unsurprised that we often struggle to see what is right before our eyes. Epiphany after all is the season of Revelation, and every week we are treated to another Gospel account that reveals the divine nature of Jesus Christ. In this morning's story we find John the Baptist describing Jesus' baptism and proclaiming him to be the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." No small Revelation indeed. Today's Gospel also includes a special conversation and invitation. Two of John's disciples take notice of Jesus and begin to follow him. Next comes one of those important pithy dialogues between the disciples and Jesus. In this, his first interaction with followers, Jesus turns and asks: "What are you looking for?" It's a searing question that certainly has lost none of its significance: What are you looking for, what do you seek, what do you want? What *are we looking for* when we notice and begin to follow Jesus?

Well, one can't help but smile at the disciples' reply: "Where are you staying?" they ask. My own hubris leads me to imagine that, given the opportunity to ask Jesus a question, I might be able to come up with something slightly more significant than: "Where are you staying." Regardless, Jesus seems to know that these disciples seek more than just information or explanation. He doesn't answer their question with something like: "Oh, I'm staying just a couple of miles down this road, second house on the left." Instead Jesus offers an invitation into relationship: "Come and see." Come and see Jesus beckons, I have what you are looking for - come, see, follow.

On this second Sunday of Epiphany perhaps we can begin to understand that divine Revelation never happens in a vacuum, it is never isolated, and it is not passive. On the contrary, Revelation always involves relationship, participation, engagement. What is in fact most important about Revelation is that there are always two sides to the equation. It's not only the act and content of revealing that's vital but the witnessing and participation in that revelation. In some old notes of one of my father's sermons for Epiphany I found scratched in the margin of a yellowing page: "revelation given –

revelation received.” What that means to me is that Revelation always involves encounter, relationship and participation for it to become real and alive.

With the words “come and see” Jesus offers an invitation into that encounter and what a lovely invitation his words are. Episcopal Priest Michael Marsh writes: “There is reassurance and promise in Jesus words “come and see.” They mean he has something for us. These words mean that he is opening himself to us and inviting us in. He has gone ahead of us and prepared a place for us.” What are you looking for...Come and see.

Whatever it is that you’re looking for, I offer that Epiphany is the season to be wide-eyed. To be open to experiences of Jesus Christ, alive and vital in your life. He is right here in front of us, perhaps winking yes, but in a loving inviting way. What is your life like right now? Is it full and abundant? Come and see all the miracles Jesus performed helping the sick and hungry, and go and do likewise. Is your life empty and desolate? Come and see the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and find hope. Is your life one of joy and celebration? Come and see the Holy Spirit descending like a dove on those being baptized, and recall your own baptismal promises. Are you lost or confused or skeptical? Come and see the Way, the Truth, and the Life who calls disciples from all walks of life to follow him, even with their unfocused questions. Friends, Revelation is something that we are called to participate in and be a part of. No matter what you are looking for, the invitation is there for all of us to come and see. Amen.