

GO & TELL the World

Wherever you are and whatever you do, you are irrevocably called to this great mission in life.

by DEACON JIM MCFADDEN

In the mid-eighties, Australian director Peter Weir made his first American film, a successful thriller, *Witness*, which starred Harrison Ford. The movie is about a young boy who sees the murder of an undercover police officer by corrupt co-workers, and he's hidden away in an Amish community for protection. As the story unfolds, he recalls what happened by putting the pieces together and then, he tells the Ford character named John Book (note the Gospel symbolism). The movie contains the marks of a witness: one sees, recalls, and tells.

Circling Back

Jesus showed Himself to His innermost circle so that the truth of His Resurrection would reach everyone through them. He opened the minds of His disciples to the mystery of His Death and Resurrection saying: "You are witness to these things." (Luke 24:48). Having seen Him with their own eyes, the Apostles could not remain silent about this incredible experience.



What's true for the Apostles is also true for us because we are members of the Church, the mystical Body of Christ. Jesus commissioned his disciples to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19) As missionary disciples, we testify that Jesus is alive. The only way we can enthusiastically and steadfastly embrace this Mission is to see through the eyes of faith that Jesus is Risen, that He is alive, and present within and among us. That's what a witness does.

Circling back, how does one 'see' the Risen Christ? Jesus instructed us: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:23-24) Put simply, if we really want to 'see' Jesus, if we want to know Him deeply and personally, and if we want to understand Him, we have to look to the grain of wheat that dies in the soil: in other words, we have to look to the Cross.

The Sign of the Cross marks a radical shift from self-reference (Ego-drama) to being Christ-centered (Theo-drama). In itself, the Cross can only express love, service, and unreserved self-giving. It is only through sacrificial giving of the self for the praise and

glory of God and the good of others, that we can see Christ and enter Trinitarian Love. Only in this way can we be grafted onto the 'Tree of Life' and truly 'see' Jesus.

Jesus is Life itself. And we are hard-wired to seek Life because we are made in God's image. That's why we're drawn to Jesus—to 'see' Jesus, meet Him, know Him, and fall in love with Him. That's the only way we can be effective witnesses to the Risen Christ.

The Hidden Seed

We too must respond with the witness of a life that is given in service, a life that is patterned after the Way of Jesus, which is a life of sacrificial self-giving for the good of others, recalling that the Lord came to us as servant. Practically speaking, how can we live such a radical life? Jesus told His disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses." (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit, just as He did at the first Pentecost frees our hearts chained by fear. He overcomes our resistance to do our Father's will, and He empowers us to give witness that Jesus is Risen: that He is alive and He is present now and forever!

How does the Holy Spirit do this? By renewing our hearts, pardoning our sins, and infusing us with the seven gifts that enable us to follow the Way of Jesus.

It is only through the Cross of the hidden seed, ready to die, that we can truly 'see' Jesus and therefore give witness to Him. It is only through this intertwining of death and life that we can experience the joy and fruitfulness of a love that flows from the heart of the Risen Christ. It is only through the power of the Spirit that we reach the fullness of the Life He gifted us with. So, as we celebrate Pentecost, let us resolve by the gift of Faith to be witnesses of the Risen Lord and bring the Paschal gifts of joy and peace to the people we encounter.



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