

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
Zechariah 12:10-11; 13:1
Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9
Galatians 3:26-29
Luke 9:18-24
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When my brothers and sisters and I were growing up, we appeared to be perfectly ordinary children. But in fact we suffered from an invisible impairment that caused our parents no end of frustration. All eight of us, it seems, were afflicted with a congenital inability to find things.

The disorder manifested itself in any number of ways. We couldn't find our homework, our bicycles, our shoes -- anything that wasn't actually attached to us. One of the first complete sentences that a child in the Gordon household learned to say was, "I can't find it."

The problem was particularly obvious when our parents asked us to look for something they had misplaced. It's not that we were unwilling to help. We would diligently search the house from top to bottom. But no matter how long or how hard we looked, we never found the missing object. What was lost, stayed lost, until one of my parents found it.

The same held true when one of us was sent to get something from another room. The child of whom the request was made would go off to the room that was indicated, and conduct a search. Then, after an appropriate interval, would come the inevitable cry, "I can't find it," or perhaps, "It's not there."

The accuracy and detail of the directions given were irrelevant. My mother might say, "Go up stairs and open the second drawer of your Father's dresser. On the left hand side of the drawer you will see a stack

of handkerchiefs. At the bottom of the stack of handkerchiefs you will find the extra set of car keys. Bring them to me.” The child would confidently set off on this well-defined mission, but a couple of minutes later the customary call would be shouted down the stairs, “They’re not there!”

Then would come the amazing part. My mother, with a distinct note of frustration in her voice would say, “Stay right there, I’m coming up.” She would stop what she was doing, walk up the stairs and over to the dresser drawer, look under the handkerchiefs, and, as if by magic, the keys would appear! It was as if they materialized out of thin air. No television conjurer could hold a candle to my Mom. Then she would say, “Look. What did I tell you. They are right there in front of your face.”

The moral of the story is, the thing you are desperately searching for is often right there in front of you, if you could only see it.

Our readings today make a similar point. The prophet Zechariah says of the people of Jerusalem, “They will look on him that they have thrust through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son. . .” Christians apply Zechariah’s words to Jesus Christ. Jesus had been teaching right there in Jerusalem all along, but only after his Passion did people receive the grace they needed to finally see him as he really is -- only then did they realize that he is the Savior for whom they had been searching.

And in our Gospel, in a moment of staggering insight, Peter recognizes that this Jesus with whom he has been spending every waking hour, is the very Messiah of God.

Time and again in our lives we need to make the same discovery. Each of us will go to Mass this Sunday with important questions. Those

questions may vary at different times in our lives. But human life by its nature is a search for answers -- a quest for meaning. Our Christian conviction is that Christ is the answer to those questions. And especially in the Eucharist we will celebrate, that answer will be right there in front of our faces. If we can only see. Meanwhile, the Church is like our mother, assuring us of the reality of what we sometimes fail to perceive, and nurturing and sustaining us until the day comes when we reveal the presence of Christ to others.