

*Based on John 1:29-42  
Second Sunday after Epiphany*

*John saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."*

*The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are*

*Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).*

John 1:29-42

Humans, typically, have five senses: hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, and touching. And it is through these senses that we understand the world in which we exist. If I ask you to imagine an orange, you can probably conjure up its color and shape, the texture of the peel and its weight in your hand, the firm squishiness of it, the smell, all crisp and citrusy, and the taste of it as you imagine biting into one its segments. Our ability to discern the physical world is remarkable.

Of course, many people have senses which are compromised or even absent, who perceive the world differently though not necessarily in an inferior way. Many animals perceive the world differently than humans as well; birds see different colors, dog's senses of hearing and smell perceive a wider range of inputs than humans, but we don't imagine they are perceiving a different or better reality.

What is most interesting to me is that no creature fully experiences reality in its completeness. All of us, whether typically human, or bird or cat or whale or worm perceive only a slice of reality; just enough for us to carve out a particular niche in the ecosystem. In evolutionary terms, we perceive only what we need to survive. Which means that what we think of as reality is actually only a proximate

model of the greater reality that is the completeness of God's creation.

These two connected stories from John's gospel are about perception and about how one's perception can be expanded to "see" the work of God in our midst. Jesus' invitation to Simon and Andrew is to "come and see." In fact, that is Jesus' invitation to all of us. As much as anything, faith is an invitation to begin to perceive the world differently, to perceive not only with our five senses but also through love. It is an invitation to see creation more completely and to discern God's active presence within it.