

## Fourth Thursday of Easter ~ 5/3

"Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me." (John 13:20)

The movie "Whale Rider" was a surprising success at the box office. There were no well-known actors or actresses in the film nor were there any spectacular special effects. Because it was a low budget film there wasn't even any advanced advertising to inform you that this great film was coming. This was one of those rare films that became popular through word of mouth. "Whale Rider" is a parable for our times. It speaks eloquently of the importance of receiving the one who was sent. It also illustrates the difficulty that can be involved in acknowledging one sent by God.

In the story the grandfather, an elder of his community, has been praying for a great leader to emerge from his people. But he is getting disheartened because all of those whom he thought had the potential for leadership turn out to disappoint him. It becomes very obvious to those watching the film that the new leader is meant to be his grandchild, a girl, but the grandfather cannot see it because his vision is too narrow. Only at the dramatic conclusion of the film does he come to realize that his granddaughter, a girl, is the chosen one.

Christ's message is in the world today and many of us are missing it because we cannot believe or even conceive that a particular person could really be the herald of Good News. We look all around us for the answer that may be right in our midst but because we are locked into our point of view we cannot see.

No one is exempt from this tendency. Both liberal and conservative Christians are biased. If we are not able to overcome our hardened hearts the Body of Christ will continue to suffer needlessly. When liberals realize that many traditional practices still offer grace then perhaps they will see the person of Christ. When conservatives can begin to embrace new movements of the Spirit that encourage greater roles for the marginalized in our church, including women, then the fire of the Spirit might have a chance to flare in unexpected places. And when we as individuals begin to see that the persons we feel threatened by, are threats only because they are not conforming to our expectations then we will pick out the whale riders in our midst and we will learn from them.

### *Questions for Reflections*

- 1. Am I a liberal, conservative or moderate Christian? How does that affect my perspective of my neighbor?*
- 2. Who has surprised me by his or her ability to lead? Why was I surprised?*

*Prayer: Lord, may I be open to receive those who come in your name no matter who they may be.*