

Reflection by Ms. Renee Valenzuela, OP
Sunday, March 21, 2021 Office of Readings

Hebrews 1:1-2:4

Easter Letter by St. Athanasius, bishop

“...we keep his feast by deeds rather than by words.” This is the phrase that caught my attention in today's second reading. Our deeds, our actions, show the depth of our faith, the depth of our belief in what has been revealed to us. Often, we hear Fr. Albeiro say something similar in his homilies, such as your words and your actions should match, meaning practice what you preach. Although that thought might sound obvious, it really can be difficult to do. I see it the same way in the Lord's Prayer, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others.” That is much easier said than done. Our actions ought to support our words. This is the root of authenticity.

When our words and actions don't match, we are the hypocrites that Jesus calls out in the Gospels, those Pharisees and Sadducees who seek to condemn and destroy him. They hate him for his authenticity and for their lack of it. Do we do the same? Do we condemn those who correct us? Do we correct others and turn around and do the same thing that we just admonished our brother for? Jesus said we ought to remove the log from our own eye before we try to remove the speck in another's and we must forgive our brother every single time he asks. Authenticity is what he asks of us.

This requires that we reflect on our own actions. Do they match our words? Are we authentic? We can say I forgive you, but do we harbor a little bit of anger, a little bit of hatred or disrespect over it? Our actions have to follow our words, *completely*. We have to be truthful, not only with our brother, but also with ourselves. Let him know if you're struggling to forgive him completely. Maybe you want to, but you don't know how. Be authentic with him. Pray for the fortitude to be authentic.

Jesus is authentic with us. His actions match his words. Maybe he struggled a bit less because he had no concupiscence, but he suffered quite a bit more than us, *for us*, for our benefit. He is no doubt higher than the angels; his name is above every other name, and every knee shall bend at his second coming. If he, the highest of all beings, is not reason enough for us to be authentic in every circumstance, then the truth does not reside in us. Our conversion has not begun. We have not heard the call to holiness. We have not opened our hearts to him... *yet*.

With God, nothing is impossible. We can do all things through Jesus, who strengthens us, for he is in fact above all of the angels, all of creation. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, he will come again to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end, because he is above all. He is the Son of God. He is One with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Name above all names at which *every* knee shall bend, for JESUS CHRIST IS LORD.

Lord, help me to be more authentic in this life, so I may behold you in the next. Increase my faith so that I will always know that you are my King, my Lord, my Redeemer. In you, all things are possible. Deepen my conversion, O Lord, so that I may preach authentically and bring souls to you. I pray this in Jesus' Holy Name. Amen.