**Embodying Christ**

* When I think about encountering Jesus versus embodying Jesus, the metaphor of inhaling and exhaling comes to mind.  We inhale, or breathe the life of Jesus in, when we encounter Jesus through such practices as spiritual disciplines, and we exhale, or breathe the life of Jesus out into the world, when we embody our faith in practical acts of  love and service.  Both are essential to our spiritual lives. We need to breathe in, and we need to breathe out, or we soon die.
* To embody Jesus means to live in the world in a certain way: it is to share the life that is within us with the world; it is to live our lives as if Jesus were living his through us.
* Jesus lives within us, and when we embody Jesus, we make Jesus visible. That’s the most basic function of a body. Bodies make us visible. This is true both of our lives as individuals, and of our life together as the body of Christ. To embody Jesus means to make Jesus visible to the world.
* How do we do that? A great place to begin is to ask, “What did Jesus do with his body?” Let me close these thoughts with two brief answers:
* 1. He drew near to us. Jesus was provided a human body to draw near to us, to show us what God is like, to make God visible among us. Incarnation. As he drew near to us, Jesus revealed God by proclaiming good news, forgiving sin, healing the sick, and challenging the status quo. Jesus drew near to us to extend God’s peace and reconciliation to creation. To embody Jesus is to draw near to others.
* 2. He gave himself for us. To embody Jesus is to give ourselves for others, it is to lay down our lives for the benefit of others.
* To summarize, to embody Jesus is to make Jesus visible by following Jesus’ example in both of these ways: in drawing near to others, and in giving ourselves for others.
* To do that, we always need to be breathing Jesus in. We can’t share what we don’t have, but we can share what we do have.