

Human Art and Imagination Sixth Week of Easter Wednesday, May 29, 2019 **Acts 17:15, 22—18:1; Jn 16:12-15** (Insofar as we can be open-minded living in the midst of mystery we can be in touch with God.)

“For ‘In him we live and move and have our being,’ as even some of your poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’”

So we have today St. Paul acting, as it were, as an apologist showing the **link between**, what you might say, **pagan religion and the Christian faith**. There is clearly a link. The link is that **it is possible for people to seek the unknown God**. Ultimately we are shrouded in mystery. The most complicated physics of modern cosmology is really shrouded in mystery. No one really understands how everything works, and no one understands where it all comes from. That is not a matter of understanding; **it’s a matter of beholding, and so we are living in mystery**. Insofar as we can be open-minded living **in the midst of mystery we can be in touch with God**. That’s what Paul is saying here. He is saying that even the poets of that era had a sense of that, a correct insight that we are all dwelling in God. This God that is being referred to is the ground of being.

But he is contrasting it to what he calls “human art and imagination.” Human art and imagination actually get us into trouble because **human art and imagination** want to think of God as we think of other things, **making God one of many things or beings**. Even scientists think in pictures. Albert Einstein said that he only could understand something when he could picture it. But **pictures will tell us nothing of God; that’s what’s wrong with idolatry**. Pictures tell us nothing about God. **God is and must remain mystery**. And **God reveals himself and can in various ways, but that’s up to God**. It is not a matter of human art or imagination. That just gets in the way of God’s revealing himself, disclosing himself. God can even use dreams. But it’s always up to God how God is revealed, **how we learn about God**.

And the chosen way that the gospel is talking about is through the power of the Holy Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit can be pictured as a dove, but not because the Holy Spirit is anything like a dove, but rather because **like a dove the Holy Spirit is gentle**. So it’s an analogy of gentleness. God became human in Jesus and **we can think of Jesus as a man**; that is not idolatry because it’s God’s choice. **But even some things people do with Jesus is idolatrous**, dressing him up in their own likeness, **making him like them rather than they becoming like him**. **It’s just reversing the whole thing**. So yes, there’s always contact as long as we remain humble and open-minded, but we have to be very careful of what we do with our human art and imagination.