

Reflection for the 5th Sunday of Easter, Cycle A

The readings for this Sunday can be found at <http://cms.usccb.org/bible/readings/051020.cfm>

1st Reading: *Acts 6:1–7*

The first reading continues from Acts of the Apostles from which we have been reading. It is sort of an early history of the Church. This selection speaks of the origins of the diaconate.

2nd Reading: *1 Peter 2:4–9*

This brief section of 1 Peter follows after his instructions on right living as a disciple. Here he talks about the communal nature of discipleship and uses the imagery of a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices. See if you don't think this sounds like what we do in the Mass and live out in our day-to-day lives.

Gospel: *John 14:1-12*

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. Jn 14:12

I'm not really a pet person but I've had pets in my life. I don't take care of them very well and don't even give them enough love so I shouldn't have ever had them in the first place. But... I remember Maggie... She was our dog when my kids were little. I remember how happy she was when she got to go somewhere with us and how sad she was when we left the house without her. She looked just miserable.

That is what this Gospel reminds me of. Jesus has just told his disciples that He will be leaving, speaking of His death, and they are hugely confused and saddened by the thought. He tries to reassure them but they don't get it. Thomas seems to think that he is going somewhere else in this world and won't be able to follow him.

But Thomas does know the way. Remember in the story of the raising of Lazarus when the apostles were telling Jesus not to go back to the Jerusalem area because the leadership of the Jews were trying to kill Him. Thomas was the one who said, "Let us also go to die with him." Jn 11:16 He knew the way. He just didn't know that what he felt in his heart was the way.

The question for us is, do we know the way and are we courageous enough follow it? If you hesitate and wonder if it is really worth it, you're in the same boat as Philip. Philip is telling Jesus, "show us the end goal of following your way and then I'll follow." And, Jesus' response is "I've been showing it to you all along. The end goal is living with Me where you will experience the fullness of life." For me, that's a goal

I want to achieve and I think Jesus is talking about the fullness of life here on earth as well as the new life we will experience in heaven.

Jesus invites us to gain sufficient courage to follow him by looking at the work's, read miracles, he does. So, look at the healings, the achieved freedom, the forgiveness, the love... that you and the people you know have experienced in your lives. All of those things are what Jesus preached. They are His works. They are what will be the basis for your belief in Him and give you the courage to follow him.

That is why I suggest that we take some time each evening to look back over our day and look for the evidence of His presence in our lives, look for His works being done in our lives. And the benefit to the world is, that if we believe, we will be part of the expansion of His works that He speak about when He tells us that we will do the works that He does.

The expansion of his works is an important part of this Gospel. When He says we will do greater works than He has done, He means greater in the extent to whom the works serve. While He was on earth, He was limited by His human limitations. Now that He has returned to the Father, He can work through the Church to have us carry out his works all over the world. Will we be courageous enough to carry out His works and participate in other people's experience of his miracles?

Reflection:

“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.” Jn 14:12

Reflection: What words or phrases caught your attentions as the Gospel was being proclaimed on Sunday? What connection do those words or phrases have to your day-to-day life? (Why do you think they caught your attention?) What might God be trying to say to you through these words or phrases? What response should you make? What action should you take?

Alternative: Share about/Reflect upon what might be called ‘the works of the Lord’ you have experienced in your life. What has been your response to his love for you? Are you doing these types of works for others? What would it take for you to more consciously do His works?

Verse by Verse:

Jn 14:1a “Do not let your hearts be troubled...” | Jesus has just told the disciples that he would only be with them for a little while longer (Jn 13:33). You can feel the anxiety in His interchange with Peter (Jn 13:36-38). And now, He begins to deal with that anxiety.

Jn 14:1b “You have faith in God; have faith also in me.” | This could be translated three different ways. It could be saying “Have faith in God; have faith also in me.” Or, it could be translated, “You have faith in God; You have faith in me also.” Different translators translate one of these different ways.

Jn 14:2 “...there are many dwelling places.” | The UBS Handbook says “...this dwelling is obviously one place within the whole (house)...”¹ Therefore, instead of living in separate houses, it describes the much more intimate living together in one house.

Jn 14:6 “...I am the way and the truth and the life.” | This sentence may seem a bit obscure. Since, in the following sentence, Jesus says “No one comes to the father except through me”, an appropriate understand would be that Jesus is the embodiment of the way to live, which is the true way; and, which, if lived faithfully, gives the fullness of life. Remember that the early Christians were call followers of the way.

Jn 14:7 “If you know me...” | In the Greek the word “you”, here, is plural. We don’t have a plural form of “you” in English. Jesus is talking to all the disciples again, not just to Thomas.

Jn 14:7 “...then you will also know my Father.” | Jesus makes this statement because He and the Father are one, as He stated in John 10:30. He is not saying that He and the Father think and act the same but that He is the Father and the Father is Him as is obvious from the reaction of the Jewish people in John 10:31-33. The Jewish people referred God as *Abba*, father, and understood exactly what Jesus was o

Jn 14:8-11 “...and you still do not know me...” | These four verses are an explanation, in human language, of the divine reality of the communion that Jesus and the Father are; and, therefore, of the Trinity). Human words can only begin to point us in the right direction but cannot actually describe it.

Jn 14:10b “The words that I speak to you...” | The second “you” in this verse is plural indicating that Jesus is talking to all of the disciples again.

Jn 14:12 “...and will do greater ones than these. Because I am going to the Father.” | “Greater” here does not mean better or more impressive. It means more expansive and is probably talking about the Church spread throughout the world can touch more people than the human Jesus could. Jesus, having gone to the father will be available to disciples in all parts of the world through the Holy Spirit.

¹ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1993). [A handbook on the Gospel of John](#) (p. 455). New York: United Bible Societies.