

Fifth Sunday of Easter - Year A

[Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4-9; Jn. 14:1-12]

Excerpts of Pope Francis - Angelus - 07 MAY 2023

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Brothers and sisters, today's Gospel is taken from Jesus' last discourse before his death. The disciples' hearts are troubled, because Jesus is telling them that he is leaving. But the Lord speaks reassuring words to them, inviting them not to be afraid. Indeed, he is not abandoning them, but is going to prepare a place for them and to guide them towards that destination.

This message is also for us. Jesus wants all of us to be with him. He tells us how to get there; he shows us the path to travel. "I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am you may be also" (vv. 2-3). But the disciples seem to be in distress, the fear of being abandoned, just as happens to us when we are forced to separate from someone we care for. Jesus uses the familiar image of home, the place of relationships. In the Father's house — he says to his disciples, and to each one of us — there is room for you, you are welcome, you will be received forever with the warmth of God. And Jesus in Heaven will prepare a place for you! And it is for all eternity.

Jesus' Word is a source of consolation, a source of hope for us. Jesus did not separate himself from us, but rather opened the way for us, anticipating our final destination: We will encounter God the Father, in whose heart there is a place for each one of us.

So, when we experience fatigue, confusion and even failure, let us remember where our life is headed. We must not lose sight of the destination, even if today we run the risk of overlooking it, of forgetting the final questions, the important ones: where are we going? Where are we headed? What is worth living for?

Without these questions, we flatten our life only into the present. We think we must enjoy it as much as possible and end up living day by day, without purpose, without a goal. Instead, our homeland is in heaven; let us not forget the greatness and the beauty of our destination! Once we have discovered the destination, we too, like the apostle Thomas in today's Gospel, wonder: how can we get there? What is the way? At times, especially when there are major problems to face and there is the sensation that evil is stronger, we wonder: what should I do, what path should I follow?

Let us listen to Jesus' answer: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). Jesus himself is the way to follow to live in truth **and** to have life in abundance. He is the way and therefore faith in him is not a "package of ideas" in which to believe, but rather a road to be travelled, a journey to undertake, a path with him. It is following Jesus, because he is the way that leads to unfailing happiness. Following Jesus and imitating him, especially with gestures of mercy towards others. This is the compass for reaching Heaven: loving Jesus, the way, becoming signs of his love on earth.

Brothers and sisters, let us live the present, let us take the present in hand, but let us not be overwhelmed. Let us look up, let us look to Heaven, let us remember the goal, let us think that we are called to eternity, to the encounter with God. And, from Heaven to the heart, let us today renew the choice of Jesus, the choice to love him and to follow him. May the Saints, who following Jesus, have already reached the destination, **sustain our hope.**