10 MAY 2020

Sunday Message

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year A • Psalter Week 1

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

(JOHN 14:1-12)

Matthew is writing for a community of mainly Jewish Christians: he therefore presents Jesus and his teachings clearly against the background of their Jewish tradition.

In today's Gospel reading, we hear Jesus preparing his disciples for his leaving them to return to the Father. This will enable them to enter into permanent communion with God. However, two of the disciples, Thomas and Philip, misunderstand his teaching, and this allows the evangelist to make it clearer. The only way to the Father is through Jesus. Jesus and the Father are so closely identified that to have seen Jesus is to have experienced the Father: the signs that Jesus worked have revealed the Father's glory to those who have been open to understanding them.

Jesus answers Thomas' objection about not knowing Jesus' destination – or perhaps destiny – so how can they know the way: he tells him that he is the Way; this is because he is the Truth and the Life – he is himself the ultimate word, the saving revelation of God through whom believers will come to the Father and be one with God. ■

REFLECT

We are nearing the end of the Easter season, and our Gospel reading today sounds a warning bell that Jesus' departure is not far off. In the Gospel of John, his being lifted up will take place on the cross, but in our liturgical calendar, we mark this by the feast of the Ascension. In this section, Jesus is concerned about strengthening the faith of his disciples.

We might consider today the person of Philip. We came across him earlier in John's account of the story of Jesus at the feeding of the five thousand, and the meaning of that sign is that Jesus can satisfy the deepest needs and longings of the human spirit. Philip remarked then that two hundred denarii's worth of bread would not satisfy the needs of the crowd. When he says to Jesus, "let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied", he is not saying that their curiosity or scepticism will be answered, but is asking that their deepest needs as human beings be fulfilled.

The Gospel of John is at the same time inspiring and challenging. When we read the Synoptic Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, we can come to the conclusion that being a disciple of Jesus is a matter of putting his teachings into practice. The Fourth Gospel is, in a sense, much more demanding. The various characters we come across, such as in today's extract, Thomas and Philip, are rather types of person than historical individuals: they represent different kinds of people and varying points of view. There is one individual who remains, significantly, anonymous and who stands for every disciple: that one is identified as the disciple Jesus loved; we might note that he is not called the disciple who loved Jesus. That person stands for each one of us, and in our reading today, Jesus tells us that he is preparing a place for us, where we will be in complete communion with him. What is required of us is faith, trust and commitment: in other words, love. ■

LEARN

The Gospel of John presents a completely different picture of Jesus and his ministry from that of the accounts of Mark, Matthew and Luke.

The mother of Jesus and the "Beloved Disciple" are never identified as Mary and John.

They are presented at the cross as representative figures, the mother standing for the community, the unnamed disciple for the individual follower of Jesus.

DO

As you walk along the street, think about Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

SAY

The word of the Lord is faithful, and all his works to be trusted

(Psalm 32:4)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**O sing a new song to the Lord,
for he has worked wonders;
in the sight of the nations
he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.**

GLORIA

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,
that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism
may, under your protective care, bear much fruit
and come to the joys of life eternal.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING — Acts 6:1-7

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

About this time, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenists made a complaint against the Hebrews: in the daily distribution their own widows were being overlooked. So the Twelve called a full meeting of the disciples and addressed them, "It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food; you, brothers, must select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will hand over this duty to them, and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word." The whole assembly approved of this proposal and elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. The word of the Lord continued to spread: the number of disciples in Jerusalem was greatly increased, and a large group of priests made their submission to the faith.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM — Psalm 32

Response:
**May your love be upon us, O Lord,
as we place all our hope in you.**
or
Alleluia!

1. Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just;
for praise is fitting for loyal hearts.
Give thanks to the Lord upon the harp,
with a ten-stringed lute sing him songs. **(R.)**

2. For the word of the Lord is faithful
and all his works to be trusted.
The Lord loves justice and right
and fills the earth with his love. **(R.)**

3. The Lord looks on those who revere him,
on those who hope in his love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine. **(R.)**

SECOND READING — 1 Peter 2:4-9

A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

The Lord is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house. As scripture says: See how I lay in Zion a precious cornerstone that I have chosen and the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed. That means that for you who are believers, it is precious; but for unbelievers, the stone rejected by the builders has proved to be the keystone, a stone to stumble over, a rock to bring men down. They stumble over it because they do not believe in the word; it was the fate in store for them.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.
No one can come to the Father except through me."
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL — John 14:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:
"Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God still, and trust in me.
There are many rooms in my Father's house;
If there were not, I should have told you.
I am now going to prepare a place for you,
and after I have gone and prepared you a place,
I shall return to take you with me;
so that where I am you may be too.
You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus said:

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.
No one can come to the Father except through me.
If you know me, you know my Father too.
From this moment you know him and have seen him."

Philip said, "Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied." "Have I been with you all this time, Philip," said Jesus to him "and you still do not know me?

"To have seen me is to have seen the Father,
so how can you say, 'Let us see the Father?'
Do you not believe
that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?
The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself:
it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work.
You must believe me when I say
that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;
believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason.

"I tell you most solemnly,
whoever believes in me
will perform the same works as I do myself,
he will perform even greater works,
because I am going to the Father."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who by the wonderful exchange effected in this sacrifice
have made us partakers of the one supreme Godhead,
grant, we pray,
that, as we have come to know your truth,
we may make it ours by a worthy way of life.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord.
Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord,
and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries
to pass from former ways to newness of life.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

redemptorist publications

Concordat cum originali: + Eamon Martin Archbishop of Armagh. Commentary by Fr Anthony Cassidy CSsR. The English translation of the entrance and communion antiphons, the opening prayers, prayers over the gifts, gloria, creed, and prayers after communion from The Roman Missal, © 2010 International Commission of English in the Liturgy Corporation. Jerusalem Bible version of the scriptures copyright: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., and Doubleday & Co. Inc. Responsorial psalms are copyright The Grail and/or Geoffrey Chapman Ltd. Published in Ireland by Redemptorist Communications (www.redcoms.org); Published in the UK by Redemptorist Publications (www.rpbooks.co.uk)

NEWSLETTER

CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY
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St Thomas' Shop *(01227 462896):* ***open Sunday mornings & weekdays*** *(Times on Shop Door)*
University of Kent Chaplaincy: **Fr Tom Herbst (01843 230 774)** *email:* ***tjherbst@gmail.com***
St Thomas' Catholic Primary School: Head Teacher: ***Miss Lisa D'Agostini*** *(01227 462539)*
St Anselm's Catholic Secondary School: Exec Prin ***Mr M Walters***; Academy Prin: ***Mr J Rowarth*** *(01227 826200)*

Office closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. You can still phone or email

Sunday 10th May: Fifth Sunday of Easter
Jn 14:1-12

Live streaming of Mass at 9:30:
Go to the parish website to watch it

Intention: Welfare of the Metcalfe Family

11am: Margot Crawley RIP

Monday 11th May: Feria *Jn 14: 21-26*

12 noon: Ward Family

Tuesday 12th May: St Pancras, Martyr
Jn 14: 27-31
12 noon: Holy Souls (Mary McGillie)

Wednesday 13th May: Our Lady of Fatima
Jn 15: 1-8
12 noon: Intention of Sean Clancy

Thursday 14th May: St Matthias, Apostle
Jn 15: 9-17
12 noon: Pamela Dodds RIP

Friday 15th May: Feria *Jn 15: 12-17*

12 noon: Friends and Family of Pauline

Saturday 16th May: St Simon Stock *Jn 15: 18-21*

12 noon: David Heap RIP

Sunday 17th May: Sixth Sunday of Easter
Jn 14:15-21
9:30am: (live stream Mass) Danielle Rosher RIP
11am: Mary Matthew Quested RIP (Reynolds)

THANK YOU to everyone who continues to send in their Mass donations, weekly collections and other very generous payments to the parish funds. The Masses will get said - we are though limited to one a day (2 on Sunday) at the moment so it may take a little longer. Thank you too for all the generous donations to our SVP and to CAFOD. Please be assured they are being passed to the right people.

PARISH MATTERS

THE TABLET Catholic Magazine online yearly subscriptions now available at a considerable saving OR download **THE TABLET** digitally online at https://www.thetablet.co.uk/subscribe or telephone: 01858 438736 or email help at: thetablet@subscription.co.uk.

THE MAGNIFICAT - the May edition is available to buy from the Presbytery - please telephone Fr Anthony (01227 462896) if interested.

VIRTUAL PARISH TALKS offered by Catholic Voices for any parishioner to engage in **-** 30 minutes talk with 20 minutes discussion & Q&A. Topics such as: "Faith in Isolation"; "Spiritual Health in a Pandemic"; "How to become a Lockdown Evangelist". To find out more go to: https://www.catholicvoices.org.uk/cv-connect
Or email: info@catholicvoices.org.uk.

WEBINAR offered by **Catholic Voices**
Catholics in Lockdown
Stories from English clergy & consecrated
Monday May 11th 2020 7:45 PM-9:00 PM
To find out more go to: https://www.catholicvoices.org.uk/cv-connect
Or email: info@catholicvoices.org.uk.

Please remember in your prayers:
Marie Strong, Pat Gill, Angeline Frizell, Alan Skeet, Louisa Ward, Janette Hughes, Maurice Crosland, Barbara Brett, Hannelore Hall, Mary Dittrich, Kathleen Hutchinson, Pat Gibson, Jenni Aldridge, Mary Reynolds, Brian Wicker, David Bull, Joan Sutton, Audrey Martin, Elizabeth Gilhenny, Bill Parker, Fr Paul Perry, Anne Queenan and Bernie Fisher.
Please pray for the repose of the souls of:
Ray Scott, Margaret Stevenson, Daniella Rosher, Archbishop Emeritus Peter Smith, Maria Bryant, Pamela Dodds Fr Gerry Flood, Roberto de Paco, John Todd, Carol Mary Kidby (sister of Sue Purbrick) and Anna Hesketh

Please pray for those whose first anniversaries are this month: Berli Sammut, Norah Pitt and James Chamerette

From Fr Anthony ...

One of the gospel passages that relatives frequently choose for their loved one's funeral is today's Gospel from John. In it, Jesus is reassuring his disciples that although he is leaving them he is preparing a place for them and will return to take them with him. "So that where I am you may be too." It is reassuring and expresses our belief that with death we don't cease to exist. Jesus is clear that he will take us to be with the Father. We have every reason to feel troubled in these days as we listen to the daily briefing coming from Downing Street where the number of those who have died from Covid-19 is announced. We do all we can to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. We don't want to catch this virus. For some it has been fatal, and we love our life and don't want to die in this way. But I have to ask myself the question: "Am I ready to die"? How do I prepare for my death? Jesus says "Trust in God still and trust in me". What does this mean? Jesus to telling us he not just a guide to salvation but he is the source of life and truth. We prepare for our own death by living a life that embraces Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Jesus does not give us an ethical code or a set of rules to adhere to but he gives us himself as the way. His way is his love of the Father's will and his outreach of love to everyone he meets. The truth of God is too vast and mysterious for us to grasp. Yet we find the truth in Jesus. If we follow Jesus, if we make him the centre of our life then we will grow in his likeness. Jesus Christ, will work though us. He is our life. As he said "As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, whoever eats me will draw life from me".

The American writer Scott Hahn has just publish a book; "Hope to Die". In the postscript he wrote the following "Hope is what will sustain us in the days yet to come. It also will make it possible for us to experience joy in this day, no matter what sorrows presently afflict us. Again, death is not the end. We were made for life. We were made for joy. And in Christ, that life and joy will be ours. In Christ, that life and joy are already ours. Death brings the fulfilment of that life and joy, but we can live in it now. Even in the midst of grief. Even in the midst of war. Even in the midst of plagues and poverty and confusion. If we are in Christ, we have nothing to fear from the terrors of the world. They cannot kill the life inside us. They cannot deprive us of the joy that is ours. They cannot rob us of the hope that fills us — the hope of eternal life".

THE UNIVERSE We are continuing to get some copies of the Universe Catholic paper. If anyone would like to pick one up from the presbytery or have one delivered to them please let me know via Parish Office email canterbury@rcaos.org.uk or telephone 01227 462896.

MARRIAGE WEEK 2020 11th - 17th MAY

Nationally set aside to celebrate commitment to the Sacrament of Marriage. The theme this year is **"The Forever Conversation,"** recognising the need for continual open communication to enable a marriage to be long lasting. Marriage Encounter is working in partnership with Marriage Week UK to promote events and celebrate marriage.
More information: https://marriage-week.org.uk/ or https://wwme.org.uk/

Day of Prayer Thursday 14th May

Pope Francis, through the Pontifical Council for Interreligious dialogue, invites believers of all religions and people of goodwill to spiritually unite themselves in a Day of prayer, fasting and works of charity to implore the divine to help humanity in overcoming the pandemic caused by the coronavirus. **The date fixed is this Thursday 14th May**. We are encouraged that this day will be lived by each one in his/her own interiority, placing ourselves before God and our conscience.
All religious leaders and peoples around the world are invited to beseech God Almighty to safeguard the entire world, to help us overcome this pandemic, to restore security, stability, health and prosperity, so that once this pandemic-crisis is over, our world may become a better place for humanity and for human fraternity than ever before.

They elected seven men full of the Holy Spirit