

Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER / A

7 MAY 2023

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.

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OPEN TO CHANGE

Living with change is often uncomfortable and unsettling. Ways of acting and seeing things no longer work as they once did. We look for direction and a sure guide, to know how to act in the present, and plan for the future. It may be a source of comfort to know that the early Church faced many challenges and needed to adapt to changing situations and contexts. The very growth of the community in Jerusalem had created its own problems and the apostles were stretched thin. Consequently, some groups were disadvantaged. It was a moment of tension and decision which led the apostles to call for deacons to be appointed so that the needs of the poor, and the need for the word to be proclaimed, would both be satisfied.

When Jesus spoke of his coming departure the disciples were rightly fearful. How would they manage without Jesus' presence to guide them? They felt ill-prepared for such change and distrustful of their own ability to find the right path. Addressing this dilemma, Jesus reminds them that his departure is how God will open the way to a future that they have not yet dared to imagine.

To deal with changes creatively we need a solid core on which we can rely. Peter stresses that steadfastness in the face of opposition and misunderstanding is an essential requirement in the life of a disciple. For others Jesus is a stumbling block, but for believers he is a precious stone. In a constantly changing world, there is one firm foundation, and we are called to trust in him and sing his praises.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Acts 6:1-7

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

They elected seven men filled with the Spirit and wisdom.

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.

RESP PSALM

Ps 32:1-2, 4-5, 18-19. R. v. 22

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust 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 Pet 2:4-9

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.

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.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 14:6

Alleluia, alleluia! / I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord; / no one comes to the Father, except through me. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Jn 14:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

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