

5th Sunday of Easter A

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. (Jn 14:6)



First Reading

Acts 6:1-7

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.

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:4-9

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.

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."

Meditation

Who does not cherish the desire for a home, a harbour of peace and refreshment? Jesus announces his departure in terms of that human desire. He is going before his disciples to prepare a place for them. "I am the Way" is as strange a proclamation as "I am the Sheepgate" (John 10:7), but they help us examine the implications of the Easter experience.

"You know the way that leads where I go" (John 14:4). We are sympathetic with the misunderstanding of Thomas and Philip. They would like to specify the road and identify the place where they will see the Father. But there is no need for a map. Jesus is the way to the Father. We must follow him. Whoever has seen him has seen the Father. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life because he is one with God: he is in the Father and the Father is in him. Authentic Christian faith is not anonymous. We cannot believe in a faceless God. Christianity teaches us to recognize God in the face of Jesus of Nazareth. By identifying his face in the disfigured faces of those whose suffering he bore on the cross, we find our dwelling place in him.