

## Read

Acts 6:1-7

Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5,  
18-19

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:1-12

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2020



## REFLECTION

Often when we are deeply worried or anxious about something it can be helpful to imagine a place of peace and comfort. Sometimes we call this our “happy place,” a space in our imagination where all is well and we can forget about our current worries. Jesus does something similar for his followers in today’s Gospel, though the image is an ultimate reality instead of a dream.

Jesus uses a comfortable, familiar image to help ease the distress of his disciples. Knowing that they are uneasy, Jesus says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me” (John 41:1). Then Jesus shares an image of the Father’s house where there are rooms for each person. The disciples could relate to the comfort of having a house and room prepared especially for them. We, too, find comfort in this image. We can relate to the peace and comfort of home and look forward to the time when we will join the Father in the place prepared for us.

The image of a house with many rooms also speaks to the idea there is no “in” or “out” in our loving God. All are welcome in God’s home. All have a place. All belong.



## ACTION

We have the opportunity to create a house where all belong in our Church today. What can you do to make sure that all people feel safe, secure and welcome in our churches? What can you specifically do to help create this inclusion in your church? Take your ideas and find ways to implement them. Do not be afraid to talk to your pastor, parish council, and other parishioners as you share the vision of welcome for your church.

*“Do not be afraid to  
welcome Christ.”*



—St. John Paul II

 QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What do you find most comforting about the image of heaven as a house with many rooms?
- ❖ Jesus says, “Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do” (John 14:12). What do you think Jesus means by this?



May 10, 2020

# FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

## LECTIONARY #52A

Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7

Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:1-12

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Today's Gospel brings Easter Time into dialogue with Holy Week, as the Gospel pulls from Jesus' words between the Last Supper and his arrest. This reading is close in message to last week's, as both consist of Jesus telling the disciples how they must live after he has gone to the Father.

**Q FOCUS:** *To follow God's plan.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

Display the liturgical calendar and point out the Fifth Sunday of Easter. We are now over halfway through Easter Time. Today's Gospel is part of what is often known as the "Farewell Discourse" in John's account of the Gospel. This is Jesus' last instruction to the disciples before his arrest in the garden.

## Church Teaching Connection

St. Teresa of Avila, a sixteenth century mystic, wrote on the call to discipleship, especially in her own monastic life. However, her spiritual writings continue to inspire us to this day. Her beautiful, poetic prayer, "Christ Has No Body," emphasizes our part in making God's plans come to life. *The prayer is found on page 190.*

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

## Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

## Gospel

John 14:1-12

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way." Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said

to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. 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.”

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

Today's Gospel can be a little heady. On the one hand, Jesus' message to the disciples seems clear: this is what you should do, and how you should act, after I am gone. That might seem like a simple thing, but this is a big deal! This message is part of what's called the “Farewell Discourse.” The Farewell Discourse is a long conversation between Jesus and the disciples in which Jesus really establishes the foundation for what became the Christian faith! Until this point, the disciples have really just been following Jesus, but they might not have been thinking about establishing a religion. They were probably just following a teacher whom they believed in! They probably weren't thinking about what would happen in the next generation of believers, let alone in two thousand years! But this discourse is Jesus explaining that God has greater plans for them. Those disciples, and we as well, are called to do great works in the name of Christ.

► How often do you think about your future? Is it something really important to you, or something that you don't really worry about right now?

► What are your plans for the future?

► What plans do you think God has for you? Are they the same as your plans, or different?

Jesus tells the disciples (and us) that he is going ahead of them to prepare a place for them (us). He also says that where he is going, we know the way, and this confuses the disciples. “We do not know *where* you are going; how can we know the way?” they say. Jesus in turns explains that *he* is the way, and the truth, and the life.

► What does this mean?

For both disciples and us, it means that the teachings he gave us—this Christian way of life, this Gospel message—are the way we should act. It's important to note that Jesus didn't leave the disciples with a checklist, or a how-to guide on establishing a religion. He didn't need to worry about that. What was important is not the method that we disciples use for bringing about God's kingdom on earth, but rather how we live our lives in the process.

It can be easy for us to think that God's plan for us is completely different from our own plan. Sometimes we might get a little too concerned about the details of God's plan for us, and sometimes we have trouble discerning exactly what God wants of us. When we have that uncertainty, the best way is to worry less about the *what*, and more about the *how*. Rather than worry about figuring out what God wants us to do, we should focus on living and acting in a Christian way, in a way that follows the Gospel values that Jesus taught his disciples. If God has a specific plan for us, the best way to discover it is to live in a way that follows the teachings of Christ. As Jesus told us last week, he is the gate through which we find God. And as he says today, he is “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6) which we are to follow.

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the “Church Teaching Connection” on page 188.*

What are some Gospel values? Can you name some specific instructions that Jesus gives us?

What values do you think you do a good job of following in your life?

Which Gospel value or values most challenges you and which is the hardest for you to follow?

## Act on the Word

### Divine Planner

*For this activity, provide the students with writing utensils and a sheet of blank paper.*

*At this point, the planner template is ready for the students to fill out. Read the following instructions:*

Say to teens: Draw two vertical lines on your sheet of paper so that you create three separate columns. Now draw six horizontal lines across the paper so that you create seven rows. In the top row, writing from left to right, label each column with these titles:

- ✧ Timeline
- ✧ My Plan
- ✧ God's Plan

Under the heading, "Timeline, fill the left-hand column with the following data:

- ✧ Next month
- ✧ Next year
- ✧ 2 years from now
- ✧ 5 years from now
- ✧ 10 years from now
- ✧ 20 years from now

Take the next few minutes to fill out this planner. Start with the "My Plan" column. Think about what goals or hopes you have for the next month, next year, and so on. Write down your goals. Think about what you want your life to be like during those times? After you've completed your own side of the planner, fill out the "God's Plan" column. What do you think God wants for you or from you during these periods?

For the teacher: Give ten to twenty minutes for this thinking/writing stage. Some students or groups may take longer, or shorter, but this is a good rule of thumb. Once all students have completed their planner, ask them to look at what they're written for a minute and compare the two plans. Are there big differences? Is everything the same?

Now ask the students to turn their paper over to the blank side and to write briefly about this exercise. How does their plan compare to "God's plan"? After this writing stage, you can ask some students to share their experience, although it is not necessary for this activity. When the last writing (or sharing) stage is done, mention to the students that knowing or understanding God's plan is sometimes very difficult. Whether we think God's plan is the opposite or same as our own, we can never truly know what God intends for us or wants from us. But part of our Christian life is to help each other try to discern God's plan for our lives and to live that plan out.

### Closing Prayer

*For today's closing prayer, offer parts of St. Theresa's prayer:*

*Christ has no body now but yours.*

*No hands, no feet on earth but yours.*

*Yours are the eyes through which he looks  
compassion on this world.*

*Yours are the feet with which he blesses all  
the world.*

*Yours are the hands through which he blesses all  
the world.*

*Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
yours are the eyes, you are his body.*

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

*Amen.*

### For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*