

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2020



Introduction

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As I Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

You may want to have a small bowl of water available to remind you of your baptism!

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,

we are raised with him to new life.

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God,

for in the beginning you created us in your image

and planted us in a well-watered garden.

In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched,

and you gave us water from the rock.

When we did not know the way,

you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters.

At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side,

and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.

We praise you for your salvation through water,

and for all water everywhere.

Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love.

Satisfy the thirsty, and give us the life only you can give.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn

Seek Ye First

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Psalm: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

Read the text [here](#).

Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:2-10

Christ is the cornerstone of God's saving work and the foundation of our lives. We are God's chosen, holy people who continuously celebrate and declare the mercy of God we experience through Jesus Christ.

Read the text [here](#).

Gospel: John 14:1-14

On the night that he is to be arrested, Jesus shares final words with his disciples. As the one through whom God is known, he promises to go before them and act on their behalf.

Read the text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

It seems like life, which is always filled with questions, is overflowing with them now: How much longer will we need to stay at home? When will we really know how COVID-19 is spread? What expert or news source can we trust? How can we possibly pick between saving lives and saving our economy? Not just when can we gather again for worship, but how can we gather again safely?

The questions in our world seem to have multiplied in the past couple of months, and I am certain that I am not the only one troubled by the things I see and hear on the news and experience in the world around me every day.

But in many ways our questions and our laments are not so very different from those that the disciples asked in today's gospel text: "Lord... how can we know the way?" Lord, we don't know where to turn. How do we know who to believe and whose advice to follow?

In response – and actually, even before they asked some of their troubled questions – Jesus gave them answers and even told them that he himself was the answer.

The first words of this text echo in my head today: "Do not let your hearts be troubled."

Don't allow yourself to be consumed by worry. "Believe in God. Believe also in me." Trust that God, the Almighty Creator and our loving Father, has this situation under control. Somehow. Even when it seems completely out of control to us.

None of us has a hotline to God with complete, specific answers to all our questions being sent to us, so our questions linger. But we not only know who has all the answers, we know the one who IS the answer: Jesus Christ.

Jesus told the troubled disciples on that long ago day in the upper room, as they lingered at the table after a shared meal before he was handed over to the authorities, to trust. To believe. To have faith in him because he had come to show them – and us – the way. And in fact, he is the way. And the truth. And the life.

These words, written by Michael Chan, which I read earlier this week, helped me and I hope they speak to you, too:

"This week's texts could not be more timely. In this moment of heightened anxiety, it is important to remember that true peace, the peace of the Gospel, does not come from our attempts to protect ourselves from earthly harm. No leader, vaccine, or test can truly bring peace. These are important and necessary measures for the flourishing of life in this world... but they do not bring the peace of Christ..."

We live in a time of profound anxiety when our world is filled with things that threaten to undo us. My prayer is that we take time to remember what kind of peace Jesus gives to us. It's the kind of peace that prevails in the thick of the battle. It's the kind of peace that looks at death, sickness and illness and knows that they have ultimately been conquered in Christ's own body."
(Michael J. Chan, from www.workingpreacher.org)

In the midst of our worries and fears, sickness and struggles during this time, may we truly experience the peace that only God gives us. The peace that comes to us from the life, death, and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, who came to this world to show us the way and to BE the way for us to follow him into eternal life with God.

That peace, the certainty that Jesus has already triumphed over death, is what gives us hope even in uncertain times, strengthens our faith every day, and enables us to sing the Alleluias of this Easter season with joy. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

I Know that My Redeemer Lives

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Nicene Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church:

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation

**he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Build us up, mothering God, as living stones united in your spiritual house. Continually strengthen your church as it is sent forth to proclaim your love. We pray especially for new congregations and those in redevelopment. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Humble us, creator God, as part of your creation. Fill us with respect and awe for the world you have made, including volcanoes, ocean currents, tropical rainstorms, glaciers, and other forces that both destroy and create.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Align our ways to your love, O God. We pray for countries, leaders, and other organizations as they prepare places for those seeking refuge and safety. We pray especially for those providing care for those suffering because of the coronavirus pandemic, and for those who work to discover effective treatment and a vaccine. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of healing and rest, help those whose hearts are heavy and weighed down by many troubles. Comfort their suffering, ease their distress, and carry their burdens (*especially those we name now*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Nurturing God, we pray for those who tend and teach young children, for the safe pregnancies of expectant parents, and for families who struggle with infertility and miscarriage. We give thanks for all who have shown mothering care, and we remember all for whom this day is difficult. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Generous God, you call into your brilliant light all who have died. Give us faith to take hold of the promise of your eternal life. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ruth Ann Sipe.