

28 Fifth Sunday of Easter Year A                      May 14, 2017  
Acts 6:1-7    Psalm 33    1Peter 2:4-9    John 14:1-12

To begin my homily today, I would like to ask you a question. Have you ever gone through a crisis of faith in your life? Perhaps a loved one has died, or you have been faced with a serious illness, or a broken friendship, or difficulties in work, or a broken marriage, or fighting in the family, or maybe you have experienced a dry prayer life, or you are starting to doubt your faith.

It's easy to convince ourselves that we have a strong faith when things are going well. When a crisis arises, however, we discover just how strong our faith is, or if we have any faith at all. When I say faith here, I'm meaning to trust in God. We discover what kind of *trust* we have in God.

Of course, there may be people who think that if God is with them, and if He really loves them, then no storm will ever hit them. So, when a storm *does* hit them, they experience a deep crisis of faith, thinking that God has abandoned them. The danger with going through a crisis of faith is that it can lead to depression and despair, or to the loss of faith in God, which is not the way out. Today's Gospel gives us some lessons on how to react to a crisis of faith.

In today's Gospel, the Apostles are now facing a crisis of faith. A few moments ago Jesus has said that one of them will betray Him. How do you think the Apostles might be feeling after hearing Jesus make that statement? Furthermore, Jesus says Simon Peter, their leader, is going to deny he ever knew Him. The Apostles are now frightened that Jesus will leave them orphaned. They have left everything to follow Jesus and, as well, some members of their families must have already begun to wonder about their mental stability.

How does Jesus respond to the Apostles' crisis of faith? Jesus comforts His disciples and calms their fears by saying, "*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, and believe also in Me.*" In essence, Jesus is telling the Apostles that no matter how difficult things might get, they must *go on believing, go on trusting in Him and in His Father.*

How *challenging* this must be for the Apostles to hear! But the truth is that Jesus is telling them this devastating news because He knows that later on they will come to

understand the fullness of life He is going to bring to the world and the absolute *necessity* of the cross that He must embrace.

On the eve of His departure from this world, Jesus bids farewell to His Apostles who are frightened by the prospect of loneliness and loss of leadership. Calming their anxiety, Jesus further comforts His “friends” by saying that He is going to prepare a place for them in His Father’s house. Jesus describes Himself as leading the way to God the Father and paints a picture of heaven in the minds of the Apostles as a spacious place with room for everyone.

“But where is it?” asks Thomas. Then Thomas asks, “How can we know the way?” Jesus responds to Thomas’ question by saying, “*I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*”

Jesus gives Thomas, and also us, a teaching on how to come to eternal life, how to find redemption, deep peace and spiritual stability in our life, *but* He also leads us there. In His life on earth, Jesus showed us how to live in this world and be faithful to God, the Father. Here, Jesus says that in Him we will have more than an historical model. He says, “I will come back to take you with Me.” In effect, our Lord is saying, “*Look, just follow me.*” Without Jesus as the *Way*, there is no going forward. Without Jesus as the *Truth*, there is no knowing God. Without Jesus as the *Life*, there is no living.

We can learn that Jesus in *the Way, the Truth and the Life* in the celebration of the Mass. Jesus is our great high priest and sacrifice. That means that Jesus is the *Way to the Father*. Jesus leads us in our worship of God, the Father, but not by pointing out the proper way to worship; rather, Jesus joins us to Himself as members of His Body, His Mystical Body, the Church. Through Christ and through this holy celebration of the Mass, we worship God, the Father, in the best possible way we could ever do.

At Mass Jesus speaks to us in the words of Sacred Scripture. He is the very *Truth* of God. In the Liturgy of the Word Jesus invites us to ponder the importance of God’s words in our lives. In Sacred Scripture, Jesus reveals Himself to us, and in doing so He reveals His Father to us also, since He and the Father are One. When we are

with Christ at Mass we can be sure that we hear the *Truth*. We now await the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

In the Holy Eucharist, Jesus is our *Life*. At Mass, bread and wine are brought to the altar. In the Eucharistic Prayer, Jesus, through the priest, gives thanks and changes these elements into His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity which we then partake in Holy Communion. This changing of the bread and wine is known as *transubstantiation*. Jesus says “whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life.” He never allows us to be neglected in the distribution of this Sacred food and drink. By His almighty divine power, Jesus changes bread into His Body given up for us, and changes wine into His Blood poured out for us.

Jesus’ Body and Blood become our *spiritual nourishment and strength*, and they increase His gift of supernatural life within us. We become so united with Christ that we no longer live alone; Jesus Christ now lives in us. As the Mass draws to a close, we prepare to return to our daily life, striving to bring the love and peace of Christ, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, to our home, to our neighbour, to our workplace, and to our world.

What real faith does is assure us that God is with us in the midst of any crisis of faith. It is that feeling, that conviction that we are not alone, that we are not abandoned, which enables us to get through our crisis of faith. *It is not we who keep the faith; it is the faith that keeps us, that sustains us, that nourishes us.* So, when things are tough and you find yourself facing a crisis in your faith life, may you listen for and hear the gentle words of Jesus: “*Believe in God, and believe also in Me.*” This is the Good News. Let us not lose heart. The suffering of the present time is temporary; the joy and glory to come are for all eternity!