

FAITH CIRCLES

WEEKLY SMALL
GROUP CATECHESIS

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR A



SUNDAY GOSPEL

Jesus, the Way to the Father

John 14:1-12

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.' ■

GOSPEL REFLECTION

by Trish McCarthy

"Have I been with you all this time, Phillip ... and you still do not know me?"

I wonder if you too have had an experience of spending a great deal of time with someone only for them to do or say something that is quite unexpected leaving you to ponder what a great mystery being human really is. The evolution, moulding and shaping of who we are through circumstances, experiences and encounter changes us and sometimes we become unrecognisable for a brief moment to those around us.

Jesus for His disciples, as He does for us today, constantly revealed Himself to them even in the midst of their confusion and misunderstanding. We are immersed through John's Gospel in the swelling revelation of the great 'I Am...' We experience in these words the intense desire of Jesus for his followers to know the truth of who He is, His love for us and the Father's desire that we should be reconciled to Him through the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Allow yourself to be moved by the intensity of Jesus words; His desire for His heart to be known intimately by us- the things that move Him, the injustice that bewilders Him, the joy that sustains Him and united with Him in heart and mind, we will do *even greater things*. ■

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Faith is not alienation or a crooked deal, but a path of beauty and truth marked out by Jesus to prepare our eyes to gaze without glasses at “the marvellous face of God”, in the definitive dwelling place prepared for each one of us. It is an invitation not to let ourselves be gripped by fear. To live life as a preparation for seeing better, hearing better and loving more.

Jesus’ words, are very beautiful. At a time of taking leave, Jesus speaks to his disciples from his heart. He knows they are sad, for they realize that things are not going well. So now Jesus encourages them, cheers them, reassures them and unfolds before them a horizon of hope. “Let not your hearts be troubled”. “I am going to prepare a place for you”. What is this preparation?, How is it done? What is this place like? What

does preparing the place mean?
Renting a room in heaven?

Preparing a place means preparing our capacities for enjoying, for seeing, for hearing and for understanding the beauty of what awaits us, of that homeland for which we are bound.

Through faith Jesus gives us this strong hope and the courage to greet the homeland from afar. This is our Christian hope. Jesus tells us: “I will come!” Christians are women and men of hope precisely because they hope for the Lord to come again. Look at the beauty of how the Bible begins and ends. At the beginning it reads: “In the beginning,” in other words, “when things began.” And Revelation ends with the prayer: ‘Come, Lord Jesus’’. Indeed, all the Church

awaits the coming of Jesus: Jesus will come again. This is Christian hope.

May Jesus give us the humility to let ourselves be prepared, that is, to let the Lord prepare the definitive dwelling place in our heart, in our sight and in our hearing”.

TALKING POINTS

1. This gospel passage invites us to recognise identity, Jesus’ and our own. How would you describe Jesus’ identity in a few words? How would you describe your own identity at its deepest level?
2. Jesus defines himself as ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life’. In what ways does this reality ring true in your life – how could Jesus be the Way to follow, the Truth of life and indeed a relationship of life itself?
3. Pope Francis invites us to realise that Jesus truly is preparing us a place where we will be with him forever. What feelings does this arouse in you and what might it mean for your life here and now?

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for each other: Ask about and pray for the needs of the group members. Individuals might pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

Reflect: In our gospel reflections both Trish & Pope Francis invite us to experience an intimate connection with Jesus. Spend some time asking Jesus to prepare your heart for such a connection that will bring fullness of life to you.

Response: *Jesus, you are our way, truth and life, hear us.*

Closing Prayer: Jesus, we thank you for preparing us a place where we will be with you forever. Heal us and bring us life that we may live in your love today and always. Amen

