

GOSPEL*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.’

REFLECTION OF POPE FRANCIS*7 May 2023*

The Gospel of today’s Liturgy (Jn 14:1-12) is taken from Jesus’ last discourse before his death. The disciples’ hearts are troubled, but the Lord speaks reassuring words to them, inviting them not to be afraid: do not be afraid. Indeed, he is not abandoning them, but is going to prepare a place for them and to guide them towards that destination. The Lord today thus shows all of us the wonderful place to go, and, at the same time, tells us how to get there; he shows us the path to travel. He tells us where to go and how to get there.

First of all, where to go. Jesus sees the disciples’ distress, he sees their fear of being abandoned, just as happens to us when we are forced to separate from someone we care for. And so, he says: “I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am you may be also” (vv. 2-3). Jesus uses the familiar image of home, the place of relationships and intimacy. In the Father’s house — he says to his friends, and to each one of us — there is room for you, you are welcome, you will be received forever with the warmth of an embrace, and I am in Heaven to prepare a place for you! He prepares for us that embrace with the Father, the place for all eternity.

Brothers and sisters, this Word is a source of consolation, and it is a source of hope for us. Jesus did not separate himself from us, but rather opened the way for us, anticipating our final destination: the encounter with God the Father, in whose heart there is a place for each one of us. So, when we experience fatigue, bewilderment and even failure, let us remember where our life is headed. We must not lose sight of the destination, even if today we run the risk of overlooking it, of forgetting the final questions, the important ones: where are we going? Where are we headed? What is worth living for? Without these questions, we flatten our life only into the present. We think we must enjoy it as much as possible and end up living day by day, without purpose, without a goal. Instead, our homeland is in heaven (cf. Phil 3:20); let us not forget the greatness and the beauty of our destination!

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Once we have discovered the destination, we too, like the apostle Thomas in today's Gospel, wonder: how can we get there? What is the way? At times, especially when there are major problems to face and there is the sensation that evil is stronger, we wonder: what should I do, what path should I follow? Let us listen to Jesus' answer: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). "I am the way". Jesus himself is the way to follow to live in truth and to have life in abundance. He is the way and therefore faith in him is not a "package of ideas" in which to believe, but rather a road to be travelled, a journey to undertake, a path with him. It is following Jesus, because he is the way that leads to unfailing happiness. Following Jesus and imitating him, especially with gestures of closeness and mercy towards others. This is the compass for reaching Heaven: loving Jesus, the way, becoming signs of his love on earth.

Brothers and sisters, let us live the present, let us take the present in hand, but let us not be overwhelmed. Let us look up, let us look to Heaven, let us remember the goal, let us think that we are called to eternity, to the encounter with God. And, from Heaven to the heart, let us today renew the choice of Jesus, the choice to love him and to walk behind him. May the Virgin Mary, who following Jesus, has already reached the destination, sustain our hope.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



Head: Jesus speaks not only of a destination — the Father's house — but of himself as the way to get there; how does this shape our understanding of faith as something to be lived, not just believed?



Heart: Jesus speaks into troubled hearts and points beyond the present moment; when life feels uncertain, what most influences your sense of direction and what you trust?



Hands: Following Jesus means walking his way, especially through love, closeness, and mercy; what is one concrete way you can live that path more intentionally this week?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.