

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.’

A REFLECTION BY POPE FRANCIS

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In today’s Gospel passage (cf. Jn 14:1-12), we hear the beginning of Jesus’ so-called “Farewell discourse”. They are the words he addresses to the disciples at the end of the Last Supper, just before facing the Passion. In such a dramatic moment

Jesus began by saying, “Do not let your hearts be troubled” (v. 1). He says it to us too, in life’s troubles. But how can we ensure that our hearts are not troubled? Because the heart does become troubled.

The Lord indicates two remedies for being troubled. The first is: “Believe in me” (v. 1). It would seem to be rather theoretical, abstract advice. Instead, Jesus wants to tell us something precise. He knows that, in life, the worst anxiety, anguish, arises from the sensation of not being able to cope, of feeling alone and without points of reference when faced with events. We cannot overcome this anguish alone, when one difficulty is added to another. We need Jesus’ help, and this is why Jesus asks us to have faith in him, that is, to lean not on ourselves but on him. Because liberation from being troubled depends upon entrusting ourselves. Entrusting ourselves to Jesus, taking the “leap”. And this is liberation from feeling troubled. Jesus is risen and lives precisely to be always by our side.

We can thus say to him, “Jesus, I believe that you rose again and are beside me. I believe that you listen to me. I bring to you what upsets me, my troubles; I have faith in you and I entrust myself to you”.

There is then a second remedy for being troubled, which Jesus expresses with these words: “My Father’s house has many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you” (v. 2). This is what Jesus did for us: he reserved a place in Heaven for us. He took our humanity upon himself to carry it beyond death, to a new place, to Heaven, so that we might also be where he is. It is the certainty that comforts us: there is a place reserved for each of us.

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There is a place for me too. Each of us can say: there is a place for me. We do not live aimlessly and without destination. We are awaited. We are precious. God is in love with us, we are his children. And he has prepared for us the most worthy and beautiful place: Paradise. Let us not forget this: the dwelling place that awaits us is Paradise. We are in transit here. We are made for Heaven, for eternal life, to live forever. Forever: it is something we cannot even imagine now. But it is even more beautiful to think that this forever will be entirely in joy, in full communion with God and with others, without any more tears, without resentment, without division or turmoil.

But how can we reach heaven? What is the way? Here is Jesus' decisive phrase. He says to us today: "I am the Way" (v. 6). Jesus is the way to go up to Heaven: to have a living relationship with him, to imitate him in love, to follow in his footsteps. And I, a Christian, you, a Christian, every one of us Christians, can ask ourselves: "Which way do I follow?". There are ways that do not lead to Heaven: the ways of worldliness, the ways of self-affirmation, the ways of selfish power. And there is Jesus' way, the way of humble love, of prayer, of meekness, of trust, of service to others. It is not the way of my self-centredness. It is the way of Jesus, who is the protagonist of my life. It is to go forth every day, asking him: "Jesus, what do you think of the choice I made? What would you do in this situation, with these people?". It will do us good to ask Jesus, who is the way, for the directions to reach Heaven. May Our Lady, Queen of Heaven, help us to follow Jesus, who opened Heaven for us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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



Head: What does Jesus declaration, "I am the Way" to heaven mean to you?



Heart: Do you feel you have taken "the leap" in faith? If not, what might it look like for you?



Hands: Jesus' way is humble love, prayer, meekness, trust, and service to others. What's one way you can grow in the Jesus way this Easter season?

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'.