

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

### The Holy Gospel: John 14:1–14

Jesus and His disciples were in the Upper Room to eat the Passover. John's Gospel records their interaction during that momentous evening in significant detail, providing us with the farewell discourses of Jesus that have meant so much to Christians of every era. Jesus washed His disciples' feet, giving them yet another example of willing service to encourage their own willing service. He then pointedly predicted that Judas would betray Him and told them, "Yet a little while I am with you" (13:33). He commanded them to love one another as He loved them, and He told them, "By this all people will know that you are My disciples" (v. 35). He predicted that Peter would deny Him. The mood around the Passover table was somber—heavy with thought and concern. At that point, Jesus spoke the comforting and encouraging words of this Holy Gospel. He reassured His puzzled apostles in the best way possible, by reminding them of who He is and of why He had come into the world. We, too, find reassurance in His words.

"Let not your hearts be troubled," said Jesus. That's easier said than done—especially when facing the prospect of losing Him, as the disciples were.

What did Jesus say would calm their troubled hearts? What did Jesus add to "Believe in God" by saying "believe also in Me"?

What assurances are given to us through each of Jesus' promises: "In My Father's house are many rooms"; "I go to prepare a place for you"; and "I will come again and will take you to Myself"?

Jesus' disciples had a lot to learn. Their slowness to understand helps us as we deal with our own spiritual dullness. Their slowness to understand became a source of blessing for us because it prompted Jesus to speak more great words regarding His person and mission: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." This is the last of the *egō eimi* statements featured in John's Gospel. The Greek verb *eimi* itself means "I am." When the pronoun *egō* is added, it becomes most emphatic. "I am" related directly in the minds of Jews to Yahweh, "I AM," the name by which their covenant Lord revealed Himself. The emphasis has Jesus saying, "I, I only, am the way, the truth, and the life."

How do the three concepts of way, truth, and life relate to and interplay with one another?

### **The Epistle for the Day: 1 Peter 2:2-10**

Do we ever outgrow our need for the “mother’s milk” of the Gospel? What is implied by Peter’s “by it you may grow up to salvation”? (See Hebrews 5:12-6:3.) Cornerstones were carefully prepared and placed in ancient times, for they determined the direction of the exterior lines of buildings. Peter’s concern was that those who came to Christ would mature into a holy \_\_\_\_, offering \_\_\_\_. We need to be \_\_\_\_ stones, properly aligned with the living \_\_\_\_ who is Zion’s (the Church’s) \_\_\_\_.

What added significance can you see in the fact that it was Peter who was using this analogy of a building constructed of living stones?

What is the result of our being a spiritual house of living stones who trust in the Cornerstone?

How is the either/or nature of Jesus and His Gospel shown in this lesson?

“As they were destined for to do” cannot mean that God predestined them to stumble from eternity, for He desires that all be saved (see 1 Timothy 2:1-7). It is their own disobeying the message that makes stumbling the destiny of unbelievers. It is this rejection of Christ that God foreknew from eternity. Our society is obsessed with “self-image” and aims at fostering self-esteem in many humanistic ways. Peter points us to our true self-image and worth in God’s grace in Christ. The titles he confers were drawn from the Old Testament. “A chosen race” (Isaiah 44:1-2): “Chosen” was used in verse 4 also in regard to Christ Himself, which adds to our appreciation of the title. “A royal priesthood” (Exodus 19:5-6): As spiritual priests, we offer ourselves to the One who offered Himself for us. “A holy nation” (Deuteronomy 28:9): We are holy through Christ’s imputed righteousness; we are set apart by God for His purpose and glory. “A people for His own possession” (Deuteronomy 14:2): We are His creatures, but more than that, His creatures redeemed by the blood of Christ for life in His kingdom.

What function does Peter point to that validates all of these titles in our lives as Christians?

Why must we say, “Once [we] were not a people, but now [we] are God’s people; once [we] had not received mercy, but now [we] have received mercy”?