

14 May 2017 (5th Sunday of Easter, Year A)

Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 32(33):1-2,4-5,18-19; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12.

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me.'

Today's gospel passage is taken from Jesus' farewell speech in the Last Supper scene in the gospel according to John. Jesus tells his disciples that he will be leaving them but that he will return. In a first instance this came true through his death and resurrection. Today the Church proposes this reading during the time of Easter, as we wait to celebrate Ascension and Pentecost over the coming two Sundays. Jesus' words can also be read within this context: he has returned to the Father but he will also return and be with us. In the meantime he invites us not to let our hearts be troubled, but to keep trusting in God; faith is our deep relationship with God.

As human beings we are created in the image and likeness of God; therefore we can only reach our fulfilment as humans when we live the life of God. As Christians we are baptised in the death and resurrection of Jesus; with Jesus we die so that we can rise up again in him. Through this new life in Christ we share, even now, the very life of God that we have been promised.

Jesus invites us to take up residence with God the Father. The Father's mansion that Jesus speaks about is not a physical space; we live in God's house when we enter a deep relationship with God. Jesus invites us to have faith; a deep trust in God and in himself.

It is not possible to see God the Father with our physical eyes; we see him through the eyes of faith. When we express our trust in Jesus, we also enter into a deep faith-filled relationship with the Father, because Jesus and the Father are one. In two weeks' time we celebrate the feast of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Holy Trinity who is also described as 'the life of God.' At our Baptism and Confirmation we invite the Holy Spirit to take up residence within us and we are filled with the very life of God. This life of God within us is renewed each time we celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation, when we share in Communion, and when we celebrate any of the other sacraments.

Through this life of God within us, our actions become God's actions, and although Jesus is no longer physically among us, he lives in us through the Holy Spirit. When we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, we participate in the work of Jesus.

This is a strange concept to comprehend; the mission of Jesus here on earth, through his incarnation, was to speak to us about the Father and to show us the Father. Jesus is the visible face of God. The Holy Spirit within us continues this work with and through us. We are invited to be an image of God, a presence of God in this world and through our faithfulness to God we are invited to continue witnessing to God's presence in the world today. We achieve this mission that is entrusted to us by trusting in God and by residing in him. There are many rooms in the Father's mansion and we are all invited to abide in him.

As a human person and as a Christian we need to continually reflect on how our actions reflect this calling and mission, and about how we are being signs of God to brothers and sisters around us. The easiest way to do this is through love.' Love reaches out to those who are in need. God speaks to today's world through us.

Fr Mario