

**Homily 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**Acts. 6.1-7, 1 Peter 2. 4-9, Jn.14. 1-12**

During the Easter season the first reading comes from the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus Christ is risen and the Apostles begin evangelizing. We read about the beginning of the Church and today we read about the beginning of the third order of Holy Orders.

The “twelve” call together the community of “disciples,” that is those who chose to follow Jesus Christ. There were complaints that the Church was not addressing all the needs of the Church, specifically the widows were being neglected. The Apostles directed that 7 be chosen. Although we do not specifically read that the new officeholders are referred to as deacons. Yet in verse one the word distribution is used, the Greek translation is diakonia whose general meaning is service or ministry.

Historically speaking it is St Ignatius who was martyred around 107-108 that provides the earliest list of the traditional three orders of bishop, priest, and deacon. St Ignatius writes in his letter to the Philippian Church as he greets them, “especially if they are at one with the bishops and presbyters and deacons who are with him...”. The Permanent Deacon receives his authority from the Bishop through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, note in verse 6 “the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them.” Through Holy Orders the Deacon is called to serve the Bishop, Priest, and the people. The Permanent Deacon has the faculty or authority to Baptize, Marry, and to perform Rites of Burial. The Permanent Deacon also has one foot with the laity; thus it is common the Permanent Deacon maintains a job within the community.

Now turning to today’s Gospel Jesus prepares the Apostles for when He is not physically present. He begins with a strong message for the Apostles; “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” Jesus is speaking to the Apostles here before His crucifixion. Jesus is calling the Apostles and all of us to have a steadfast faith. Jesus calls us to trust in God but also to trust in Him!

Jesus is preparing the Apostles for what is to come. But Jesus also is preparing us for our journey. Jesus knows we all will face uncertainty, struggles, and perhaps even doubt. Jesus’ instructions are perfectly clear, “You have faith in God, have faith also in me.” These are not just comfort words, they are a command.

In a world filled with anxiety, doubt, divisions in society, Jesus invites us to surrender our hearts and our souls to Him. We are called to realize that faith is not the absence of trouble; it is the acknowledgment of the presence of Jesus Christ in the midst of trouble, in the midst of all challenges throughout life.

Jesus tells the Apostles “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.” Jesus is making a commitment with the apostles and us that we belong. Jesus is painting a picture of our Father’s house, a place, prepared for each one of us. This is not a vague hope; it is a personal promise. He is not simply preparing *a place*; He is preparing *your place*. This means that our journey of faith is not aimless. Every act of love, every sacrifice, every moment of perseverance is leading us home. My friends in Christ, Heaven **is not** an abstract idea—it is the fulfillment of our deepest longing: to be with God forever.

St. Thomas asks the question we might all ask: “*Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?*” Jesus’ answer is not a map; it’s Jesus Himself. Jesus’ answer is direct, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life.** Jesus is **the Way**, He is not just a guide; He is the path itself. Following Him means shaping our lives after His: forgiving as He forgave, serving as He served, loving as He loved. Jesus is **the Truth** – In a time when truth is often twisted, Jesus is the unchanging standard. His words and actions reveal the heart of God. Jesus is the source of eternal **life**, but also the fullness of life here and now. Life in Christ is not merely survival it is joy, purpose, and peace. By embracing the teachings of Jesus Christ, we can achieve holiness and everlasting life.

In times of difficulty we need to know we are not alone in our journey. Jesus Christ established the Church for all of us. The cornerstone is a reference to the strongest part of the building. St Peter reminds us that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Church. The foundation then would be the Apostles and then we are the living stones. The living stones reference is a metaphor for the Church. We are called living stones which make up the church. We are called “living stones” being built into a spiritual house. This means our faith is not private it is part of something bigger. The Church is not just a building; it is a living community where each of us has a role. When we live our faith authentically—through acts of mercy, justice, and compassion—we become part of God’s dwelling place on earth.

During our journey of faith let us not fear! Jesus has shown us the way, let us follow Him! Jesus has demonstrated and has always shown us the truth, the truth which lies in love. Let us make use of our Church, our Bishops, Priests, Deacons and Sacraments to grow in faith, hope and love. Trust and surrender to Jesus Christ for He is with us today, tomorrow and always!