

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Acts. 6.1-7, 1 Pet. 2.4-9, Jn. 14.1-12

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, today we hear that we are a “chosen race a royal priesthood.” Through our Baptism we all are united to Christ, every one of us. No matter our state of circumstances we can offer every aspect of our lives, work, prayer and sufferings in union with Christ's redemptive Sacrifice.

In our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles we hear the Hellenists (The Jews who spoke and worshipped in Greek) point out to the Apostles that not all the needs of the people are being met. The widows and orphans are not receiving the attention and the help to meet their needs. The 12 Apostles are doing all the work. The Apostles gather. I believe that Peter is the one who gives the others the direction to choose 7 men of good repute, full of the spirit. The Apostles then prayed and laid hands upon them creating the first Deacons.

Notice they picked “seven”, which is a holy number (creation). The laying on of hands is the means of transferring power for a certain task. This is demonstrative of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. These seven men were chosen to take over the charitable distributions of food and other material needs so as to allow the Apostles to preach and celebrate the Eucharist.

Today we have Transitional Deacons and Permanent Deacons. Transitional Deacons are those men preparing for ordination to the priesthood. Usually, they remain a transitional deacon for about 1 year. The Permanent Deacon serves first, the bishop, 2<sup>nd</sup> the parish to who he is assigned. The Permanent Deacon can Baptize, witness Marriages, distribute communion, proclaim the Gospel, preach Homilies at Mass, and officiate burial rites. Just like the original seven deacons' today's deacons are here to help the parish under the direction of the priest.

Jesus tells us in today's Gospel “believe in God, believe also in me.” We hear that the Apostles Thomas and Philip question Jesus as they try to understand what Jesus is saying. Many people today still struggle in understanding this concept of believing. We are called to believe in what God has revealed to us by Jesus Christ. We cannot see God directly but by faith we can know God and therefore we can have a personal relationship with Him. Faith is a belief in something not perceptible by the physical senses. The Apostles were with Jesus for three years, yet they struggled, they could ask Jesus directly for explanations.

For us today we too often struggle yet through our faith we believe in the revelations of God by Jesus which are given us through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

Jesus tells us “in my Father’s house there are many rooms.” Jesus is speaking of heaven where we Hope to dwell with God as His family forever. We cannot achieve eternal salvation on our own, we need Jesus’ redeeming grace. We need to have Hope, which is to trust in the promise of eternal salvation. In heaven we will be rewarded according to our good works, according to our charity or love, how we treat one another.

In a reply to Apostle Thomas’s question Jesus says “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Jesus reminded Thomas and the Apostles that He is the only way because He is the revelation of the love of the Father and perfectly reveals God’s will for every person. By following Jesus’ teaching we can achieve holiness and everlasting life.

In 1 Peter 2.1-3 Peter guides us to be like infants seeking milk; we as Christians should be seeking the spiritual milk of God’s holy grace, putting aside all our dispositions and attitudes that would prevent our spiritual nourishment. Our Priests are here to lead us and guide us in our relationship with God the Father. The Deacon aides the Priest and the parish in their spiritual journey. We together, the Church, are on a journey with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Recall in today’s first reading in verse 4 the “living stones,” this is a metaphor for the Church. But we must note the cornerstone is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone because He is the foundation and the promise of God to His creation. Jesus is the most important part of the Church.

Through the Holy Spirit we are guided and given the graces we need to grow our relationship with God. The Church in which Jesus Christ has established is our guide. We have free will; we can choose to seek God or not. My friends, our Church, our Parish has many opportunities for each and everyone of us to build on our Faith, Hope and Love. I encourage you to take advantage of all the opportunities offered for us to grow in Faith, Hope and Love. Like the Apostles may we pray for the graces we need and may we seek them through the sacraments of the Church.