

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR A

THEME: **JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE**

Our readings today tell us how the early Church accepted the challenge of keeping Jesus' memory alive by remaining a dynamic Christian community, bearing witness to Christ by their unity, fidelity in worship and spirit of loving and humble service. Today's Gospel reading introduces Jesus as the Way to God, the Truth to be accepted and the Life to be lived and shared.

The first reading, taken from Acts of the Apostles, shows us the early Church as a loving, serving and worshipping community. It easily solved a problem of discrimination by instituting the ministry of the diaconate for the service of the community. St. Peter in our second reading encourages the early Christians to renew the memory of Jesus by making their community a spiritual edifice built from the living stones of believers upon the Living Cornerstone of Christ. Peter praises Christians, Gentiles and Jews, as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God's own people.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus consoles his apostles who were sad and disheartened after knowing about his arrest and crucifixion by assuring them that he is going to prepare an everlasting place for them in his Father's house in heaven. He gives them the assurance that he will come back to take them to their heavenly abodes.

In answering the question asked by Thomas, Jesus declares that he is the safest and surest way to God, discrediting the notions that all religions are equally sure ways to reach God, or that no organized religion but only living a good life of sharing love is necessary to reach God. Jesus is the Way to God, because he is the way of loving, humble and sacrificial service. Jesus is the Truth who taught and revealed truths about God and his relation to us. Jesus also taught moral truths by demonstrating them in his life. Jesus is the Life, because as God he possesses the eternal life of God and shares his divine life with his disciples through the Word of God and the sacraments.

My dear friends in Christ, we accept Jesus as the way by walking the narrow way of loving, humble and sacrificial service. We accept Jesus the truth by learning and practicing what he taught as given in the Scriptures and in the teachings of the Church. We share the divine life of God by making use of the means Jesus established in his Church; actively participating in the Eucharistic celebration and properly receiving the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion. By the meditative and daily reading of the Word of God. And by allowing the Holy Spirit living in the Church and within us to guide and strengthen us.

Like the early Christian community these will help us to be a dynamic and vibrant Christian community bearing witness to Christ by our unity, fidelity in worship and our spirit of loving and humble service.