

Reflections on the Readings for the 5th Sunday of Easter A

John 14:1-12

Today's extract is one of the most famous passages from Jesus' Last supper Discourse with the Apostles. The opening verses are often chosen as the Gospel Reading at funerals, for obvious reasons. The assertion that, "In my Father's house are many rooms," is one of great comfort and hope to those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. The whole passage is full of lines which bear further and deep reflection. The two apostles named in the passage – Thomas and Philip – act as foils for Jesus to explain himself further. I suspect that the question posed by our so-called "Doubting Thomas" (of our Gospel on the 2nd Sunday of Easter) is one that all the others wanted to ask, but only he has the gumption to do so. His enquiring mind – "Curious Thomas" perhaps, rather than "Doubting" – leads to Jesus' full revelation of himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life, all central themes to John's whole Gospel.

Acts 6:1-7

Divisions in the Community on linguistic grounds lead to the appointment of seven men who will be seen as the forerunners of the diaconate. A key part of the mission of the Early Church – and hence also for the church today – is to reach out to and care for all those in need. It is a call not only for a particular order in the church – the diaconate – but to all members of the community. Many further converts are attracted to become members, as we are told, even "a great many of the priests" of the Temple, and so the message of the Good News continues to spread.

1 Peter 2:4-9

In this passage Peter reaffirms the faith of those to whom he is writing and who are facing persecution. Jesus is the fulfilment of the Hebrew Scriptures: the stone rejected but which is, in fact, "a cornerstone chosen and precious". Those who reject him "stumble because they disobey his word". In contrast their faith has called them "out of darkness into his marvellous life." Among other titles given to these believers is that of being "a royal priesthood". In the Christian Scriptures the title of priest is reserved only for Christ (in the Letter to the Hebrews), or to name the priests of the Temple in Jerusalem. Here it designates the whole community of believers who offer worship to God.

Prayer

Lord, your words offer us comfort and hope. May we share these gifts with all those around us, that others may come to know you as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen.