

5th Sunday of Easter (A)
(Acts 6:1-7 / John 14:1-12)
14.05.2017

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today's gospel passage is part of what is usually called "Jesus' farewell discourse", the words Jesus spoke at the last supper, his final instructions or, if you prefer, Jesus' last wishes to his disciples.

The disciples are perturbed by the predictions that Jesus has just made. First, the prediction of Judas' betrayal: "In all truth I tell you, one of you is going to betray me". Then, the prediction of Jesus' departure: "Little children, I shall be with you only a little longer". And finally the prediction of Peter's denial: "In all truth I tell you, before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times". The disciples are saddened by these predictions and worried about their future: What will happen to them if Jesus abandons them?

Jesus wants to console his disciples and strengthen their faith: "**Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me**". Jesus assures his disciples that, in the midst of all their worries, troubles and pains, He will be with them always, even if he seems to be absent. If Jesus is going away, it is to prepare a place for his disciples so that where he goes they may be too. The place where Jesus is going and where we shall be with him for ever is nothing other than 'the Father's house'. The way to get to the Father's house is through Jesus: knowing Him and following Him; listening to Jesus and putting into practice what He says. From this perspective, Jesus is really "the way, the truth and the life".

Just as Jesus' disciples experienced troubles in their lives, so we all experience worries and fears in our own lives.

Some people suffer from incurable illness: they are afraid and angry. Some suffer from depression: They feel alone.

Some people go from one experience of grief to another. They know successive losses.

Some find no meaning to their lives and are tempted by suicide.

Some suffer from natural disasters

Some people suffer from the consequences of the economic crisis. They work in difficult situations where they are exploited or unfairly paid. Others are unemployed, unable to look after the basic needs of their loved ones.

Some are disappointed by what look like blocked political perspectives. They are discouraged, disorientated, and ask themselves legitimately: Where are we going? Nationalisms are flourishing anew here and there. Few statesmen or stateswomen are to be found among our political leaders! They are few who have a vision for the common good! A lot of the world's politicians are motivated by a thirst of power, personal ambitions or even sectarian ideologies.

Some people are victims of violence and wars raging in so many places.

Some are persecuted for their faith.

Millions of migrants are forced to leave their homeland, their families and their jobs; they desperately seek asylum and are continually menaced by death.

To all of these, to each one of us, Jesus says today: **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me”**.

In what way can our trust in God and our trust in Jesus help us to manage to get through the trials of life? The Good News is that Jesus promised us to be with us and to be there for us always. Jesus requires from us only to trust in God and to trust in Him, to trust in his active presence by our side.

The Lord did not promise to protect us from every trial, to take all difficulties away from us, to dissolve them; rather the Lord promised to be with us in the midst of our trials, big or small; to help us to go through them and beyond them.

The Lord is with us to help us to consent to all that is happening in our lives, all our troubles, and get through them not with anger, bitterness or grudge, but with a loving and forgiving heart, knowing that we are infinitely loved by our heavenly Father, loved with a love which is forever. The Lord will never abandon us even if the appearances seem to say the contrary. This is the way Christ lived his passion and death. This is the way we have to go through life.

If we are discouraged because the Lord does not seem to listen to our prayers and give answer to our legitimate requests, His word is there to remind us to be patient. The Lord will answer us in his own time, in his own way. The Lord knows what is best for us.

The Lord is with us to remind us of the full picture. What happens to us is important. But more important is the certitude that the Lord is already with us and will always be with us to the end of time and even over and beyond death. Our lives don't begin with our birth to finish with our death. Our lives continue beyond death. If we are suddenly struck by death, our trust in the Lord reminds us that death is not a meaningless end, but a passage towards eternal life. Perhaps we shall die very soon, but this will not be the end: our lives will continue for ever in Christ. The Lord recalls the full picture to us who, so very often, are very short-sighted, prisoners of the present moment alone. Trust in the Lord, trust in the victory of the Lord over death, this is the victory which He has promised to share with us. This is a secure anchor for our lives as we go through troubled waters.

Brothers and sisters, **“do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me.”** It is the Risen Lord who speaks these words to us this morning. Trust in my love for you always, and you shall know peace, you shall know eternal life! Amen.