

5th Sunday of Easter (A)  
(Acts 6:1-7 / John 4:1-12)  
07.06.2023  
To believe

Dear brothers and sisters,

In today's gospel passage, Jesus invites us several times to trust in Him and to believe in Him. 'To trust' and 'to believe' are two ways of translating in English a unique word in the original Greek text of the gospel. So, we are invited 'to believe' in God, 'to believe in Jesus'. To believe! What does the verb 'to believe' mean?

To believe in Jesus is to recognize that in Him the invisible God has made himself visible for us, the distant and remote God has come near to us: He is by our side, He is within us. He speaks to us and listens to us. To believe in Jesus is to recognize that Jesus is not only a good and great man, or even a superman, but that the man Jesus is God himself. In today's gospel passage, Jesus tells us: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?" To believe in Jesus is to know that He and the Father are one, and consequently that Jesus is God. To convince us, Jesus himself tells us: "The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself; it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work". To believe in Jesus is to confess that Jesus is Lord, the unique Son of God made flesh, God himself. To believe in Jesus is to confess that Jesus is the Messiah foretold and expected by the prophets.

It is interesting to notice that in the Latin text of our gospel passage the word used to say 'to believe' or 'to trust' is 'credere'. Every Sunday, we sing the Creed: credere, creed, credo are words that belong to the same semantic root. One of the possible etymologies of the word 'credere' is 'cor-dare' which means: to give one's heart to someone. When Jesus invites us to believe in Him, he invites us to give our heart to Him. We might ask ourselves: Who reigns in our heart? Or even what reigns in our heart? Is our heart unified in Jesus and his gospel? Is our heart given to Jesus? Does Jesus reign in our heart? Or is our heart divided, inhabited by an idol, not to say by many idols. We know that idols are legion! Our idol can be a screen (the screen of a mobile phone, a laptop, a tablet or a TV). Our idol can be an addiction, a human being, or even ourselves (when our way of behaving is something like: my way or no way)... Our idol can be money or anything material. The question we have to ask ourselves is: To whom or to what does my heart belong? The question is this: Do we believe in Jesus? Or do we believe in an idol? Who is the god we worship? Is he the true God? Or is it an idol that we worship?

Jesus invites us to believe in Him, to give our heart to Him. It is never too late to begin to do it; or it is never too late to come back to Him. It is never too late to put Jesus at the heart of our thoughts and dreams. To speak of putting Him in our hearts is to say to put Him at the place where we make our life choices and take our decisions

In today's gospel passage, Jesus says to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled". The hearts of the apostles had many reasons to be perturbed, because Jesus had just predicted Judas' betrayal: "One of you is going to betray me" (Jn 13:21); moreover Jesus had predicted his own departure: "I shall be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and where I am going,

you cannot come” (Jn 13:33); and finally Jesus had predicted Peter’s denial: “Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times, Peter” (Jn 13:38).

What about ourselves? Is it not true that our own hearts can also be perturbed every so often (maybe ever right now) in one way or another? Are we not perturbed by the political instabilities of the nations and their cortège of wars and revolutions? Are we not perturbed by the economic crisis, the unemployment of so many people, and the difficulty for many of our brothers and sisters in humanity just to make ends meet? Are we not perturbed by the fact that human values seem to be disappearing from the world scene one after the other? Are we not perturbed by a shrinking Church which is no longer a reference for our societies? To all of us who are legitimately perturbed, Jesus says exactly what he said to his disciples: “Do not let your hearts be troubled: Trust in God still, trust in me”. Do not be troubled; just believe that **I am with you**, in your heart, ready to help you by my presence and my word.

To this reassuring word Jesus adds the promise: “I shall return to take you **with me** so that where I am you may be too”. With this promise of Christ, we are at the heart of our faith, of our belief. We know that Jesus is always faithful to his promise. This promise of Christ is life-giving; it is really Good News. Jesus invites us to believe that He is **with us** here and now and that He will remain **with us** after our death and for ever. The heart of the Good News is that Jesus is **with us** for evermore. The call is for us **to be with** the Lord today and everyday, confident that He will remain **with us** ever after death and for all eternity. We have to believe that the Lord is **with us** and that we are called to be **with him**. This is the Good News!

We understand now that to believe in Jesus is an unending process. Jesus says to us: “I am the way, the truth and the life”. We are invited to walk the path of life **with Jesus** day after day. Little by little, his presence by our side will reveal the truth to us. With that it will be given to us to experience fullness of life. The Good News is to believe that Jesus is **with us** each day of our lives and to believe that He will remain **with us** for all eternity.

Risen Lord, increase our faith in you! Teach us how to be and how to remain with you always, in prayer and in life.