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FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

First Reading: Acts 6:1-7

About this time, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenists made a complaint against the Hebrews: in the daily distribution their own widows were being overlooked. So the Twelve called a full meeting of the disciples and addressed them, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food; you, brothers, must select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will hand over this duty to them, and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word.' The whole assembly approved of this proposal and elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. The word of the Lord continued to spread: the number of disciples in Jerusalem was greatly increased, and a large group of priests made their submission to the faith.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 32(33):1-2,4-5,18-19

May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.

Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just;
for praise is fitting for loyal hearts.

Give thanks to the Lord upon the harp,
with a ten-stringed lute sing him songs.

For the word of the Lord is faithful
and all his works to be trusted.

The Lord loves justice and right
and fills the earth with his love.

The Lord looks on those who revere him,
on those who hope in his love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-9

The Lord is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house. As scripture says: See how I lay in Zion a precious cornerstone that I have chosen and the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed. That means that for you who are believers, it is precious; but for unbelievers, the stone rejected by the builders has proved to be the keystone, a stone to stumble over, a rock to bring men down. They stumble over it because they do not believe in the word; it was the fate in store for them. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

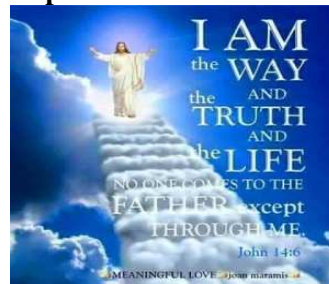
Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'

Alleluia!

Gospel: John 14:1-12



Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him.' Philip said, 'Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,' said Jesus to him 'and you still do not know me? 'To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, "Let us see the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? 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. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason.

I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father.'

Jesus urges us to trust in God and trust in him, in today's Gospel. He tells us that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he is the way to the Father., In the light of the resurrection, the risen Lord is not only the Gate but also the Way to where he was going and where He wants us to follow. Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for us and then come back for us. In his Father's house there were many rooms; meaning that there would be for all of us when our time comes? Jesus says "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me".

The Gospel helps us to become more deeply aware that to find Christ is to find the Way, Truth and the Life. We are invited to have total faith and trust in God.

Verses one to six are often requested to be read at a funeral; it was read at both my parents funerals.



*There is an open gate, at the end of a road.
Through which we must go alone.
And there is a light we cannot see
Our Father claims as his own.*

These few words along with the image of Jesus Christ, in heaven about to 'welcome each and everyone of us' on the day we are called home.

On Thursday we celebrate the 'Feast of St Matthias, Apostle. Tradition associates Matthias with spreading the gospel in Cappadocia and provinces bordering with the Caspian Sea; in Ethiopia where according with tradition, he was martyred.

We ask for your Prayers: For those who are sick in mind and body, in our parish family, our own family, the people of Tetbury and Cirencester.

For those who have died recently especially of the Corona virus and all whose anniversaries are at this time.

In our Diocesan prayer link we remember the Abbey Church at Downside with the priest and parishioners of Stratton on the Fosse.

Fr Philip was received into the Catholic Church and later ordained into the priesthood in Downside Abbey.

Parish Finances: Thank you to all those who continue to support our parishes through standing order; this is a great way to support your parish. If you do not currently donate this way; it is easy to do, whether you pay tax and 'Gift Aid' your contribution or not, please email the parish office and a form will be sent to you. A cheque made payable for your parish would also be most welcome. Make the cheque payable to the parish and put through the door of St Peter's or the post box for St Michaels. Thank you for your continued support.

Mass Obligation: There is no Sunday or weekday Mass – the Sunday obligation has been lifted for the time being. We can still pray together and look after one another. We can take care of those around us who might be in need. We can build up a sense of community in the area in which we live and maybe we relearn the simple things of faith whilst we hunger for the Bread of Life in the Eucharist.

Mass Livestreamed: Several parishes throughout the country are livestreaming the Mass each day: Clifton Cathedral Sunday Mass is @ 9.30am; St John The Evangelist Church, Bath Sunday Mass is at 10.00am. Please check their website for weekday Mass times and also the Rosary and other services.

Prayer for Spiritual Communion

Lord Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love you above all things, and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul, so that I may unite myself wholly to you, now and forever. Amen



By Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

Memorare: Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

We can still be instruments of peace, of joy, of faith and love in so many ways. We are a community of hope and faith and love, and we can still be proclaimers of the Gospel even when our normal, everyday routine is upset. May God watch over each and every one of us, and remind us – always – that he is near.

Please stay well and stay safe. God Bless.