

## The Fifth Sunday of Easter Year A - May 22, 2011

**The First Reading - Acts 7: 55-60 or Deuteronomy 6: 20-25**

**The Psalm - Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16**

**The Second Reading - 1 Peter 2: 2-10**

**The Gospel Reading - John 14: 1-14**

### Introductions to readings

#### **Acts 7 : 55-60**

Stephen was the first Christian to follow his Master to execution. The Jewish leaders found the teaching, that the crucified and resurrected Jesus is their true Messiah, was even more dangerous and heretical than Jesus's own life had been.

#### **1 Peter 2 : 2-10**

This writer, after the encouragement we have heard from him since Ester, now directs us to think of Jesus as the foundation stone on which the church is built. Although the resurrection is a stumbling-block to many, we have been chosen by God to proclaim its truth.

#### **John 14 : 1-14**

Jesus taught his disciples how completely he and his heavenly Father are united. We are to believe and trust his promise, that to know him is to know God, and he is our way to the place prepared for us.

### Prayers

#### **Collect One**

O Almighty God,  
who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men;  
Grant unto thy people,  
that they may love the thing which thou commandest,  
and desire that which thou dost promise;  
that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world,  
our hearts may surely there be fixed,  
where true joys are to be found;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### **Collect Two**

Lord of all life and power,  
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son  
overcame the old order of sin and death  
to make all things new in him:  
Grant that we, being dead to sin  
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,  
may reign with him in glory;  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
be praise and honour, glory and might,  
now and in all eternity.

#### **Prayers of the people**

Let us pray for the peace and welfare of all people, especially for those whose lives are threatened by violence:-

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Loving and eternal God, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ after his had suffered a violent death, stay the hand of the murderer, turn the passions of disordered humanity from hatred to respect for life. Lord hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer, and grant us your peace.**

Eternal Ruler, who will bring to perfection this creation, let the rule of your Kingdom be confessed by all who the welfare of others in their hands. Lord hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer, and let justice prevail.**

Bless, good Lord, the mission of the church, in making known the victory of Christ over sin and death. Let this victory appear in what we say, and in our deeds of caring for those in need through our welfare agencies and our individuals actions. Lord hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer, and your compassion made known in word and deed.**

As Jesus promised to prepare the way and there are many rooms in your house, give us grace to trust in your promise of eternal for those whom we love and for ourselves. Lord hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer, and let us see life in triumph over death.**

### Post Communion Prayer

Eternal God,  
in word and sacrament  
we proclaim your truth in Jesus Christ and share his life.  
In his strength may we ever walk in his way,  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### Commission & Benediction

You are a chosen race,  
a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation.  
Therefore go out as God's own people  
to proclaim the mighty acts of God in Christ.

And may God be your rock and your refuge;  
May Christ Jesus take you to himself and be with you always;  
And may the Holy Spirit open heaven wide before you,  
.....that you might see the glory of God in all the things of earth.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,  
.....In the name of Christ. Amen.

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### General Prayer of Thanksgiving

(Preface reformatted for use apart from communion)

We give you all thanks and praise, O God,

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for we have tasted your goodness,  
and our lives are secure in your hands.

You laid the cornerstone of creation  
and built earth and heaven by hand.  
Through your prophets you promised to lay a stone in Zion  
as a place of refuge for your faithful ones,  
and a stumbling block for those who reject your ways.

In Jesus the Christ, your promise has been fulfilled.  
He came among us as the way, the truth and the life,  
and in him we have seen you.  
He was rejected and crucified,  
committing his spirit into your hands,  
but you raised him to new life  
and seated him at your right hand.  
Now he is preparing a place for us  
and drawing us to you,  
that we might be a holy priesthood  
and offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to you.

Therefore, with our hearts lifted high,  
we offer you thanks and praise at all times  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

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### Prayers

Send, O Lord, your Spirit upon us all to give us the power of your Father that we might be faithful witnesses to you and all you are doing in this world. This we ask in your holy name.  
Amen.

We are people of the light.

To be in the light is to see God standing next to us...

To stand in the light is to see God's miraculous work. We can enjoy the universe, care for it, and wonder at it.

To see the light is to experience the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

To experience the light is to see into eternity.

Together we praise God, who has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Amen.

O God, who from of old taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour.  
Amen

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of our land as your love would make it: - a land where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;- a land where the benefits of civilized life are shared, and every one can enjoy them; - a land where different races and cultures live

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in tolerance and mutual respect; - a land where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love. And give us the inspiration and courage to build it. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God from whom every gift derives, we gather to worship you this day. We have come to you in thanksgiving and praise, to know that you are God and to place our lives anew into your perspective. Enlarge our vision this hour with your Word. Instill in us, again, your hope in place of our despair, your peace where our hatred threatens, your joy amidst our depression, your love overwhelming our apathy. May your Holy Spirit surround and indwell this congregation now, and forevermore.

### Sermon outline

Jn 14:1-14 Do not let your hearts be troubled

A most frequently read NT passage - especially at funerals....

1. Trouble 1a: follows telling Jesus telling the disciple of his departure 13.33: where I am going you cannot come. Naturally they are devastated - deeply troubled... As ever, Jesus brings distinctive comfort in those memorable words...

2. Trust 1b-4: Trust in God, trust also in me - heart of Xian faith - makes all the difference in our times of trouble!

He speaks of their Future: There are many rooms in my Father's house - mansions (AV) - great houses of old - wonderful concept/beautiful picture of heaven!

Vulgate = mansiones = resting places on road/pilgrimage..

Wm Temple: wayside caravanserais along the route...

NRSV/Ampl - dwelling places; GNB/NIV/RSV - many rooms; The Message - plenty of room - room for plenty!

Wm Temple: a dragoman would make preparations for traveller.. I am going there to prepare a place for you. Jesus is the prodromus who went before us (Heb 6.20)

He then makes a wonderful promise: I will come back & take you to be with me that you also may be where I am..

3. Truth 5-14: J proclaims the truth of the Gospel in response to Thomas' question: Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way? Thomas' query enables us to hear a memorable reply: I am the way (v6) & the truth & the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

a) the Way - to be followed - cf the broad & narrow way (Mt 7:13/4)

b) the Truth - to be believed - ct many false prophets...

c) the Life - to be lived - blessings of eternal life...

by Norman Porteous

### Online sermon sources

**Sermons that work** - three of the images in today's readings are considered: three of these images found in today's readings: The passage from Acts portrays Jesus as "standing at the right hand of God," occupying a place of supreme honor beside the heavenly throne.

The reading from First Peter features Jesus as a cornerstone that is rejected by mortals, yet chosen and precious in God's sight.

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The selection from John's gospel presents Jesus as making ready a place where we can abide in the house of his Father.

[http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons\\_that\\_work\\_128266\\_ENG\\_HTM.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons_that_work_128266_ENG_HTM.htm)

**Day 1** - No power shortage here. The passage from Acts is the basis of an examination of the positive power of Christ and the church. "...We have seen even greater works than he did, whether that has been the world-wide spread of the gospel with his word of love, forgiveness and reconciliation in the search for peace, his work to heal and make whole as the church has established hospitals and schools all across the globe, or his value for human life, even the least of these a norm woven into the ethics of much of western culture. Whatever we ask in his name he promises to do. There is no power shortage here for any of us, so long as it is Christ's work we are taking up."

[http://day1.org/1090-no\\_power\\_shortage\\_here](http://day1.org/1090-no_power_shortage_here)

**America magazine** - Christians, recognise your dignity. The text is: You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own (1 Pt. 2:9) John R Donahue, SJ, states, "Lives of faith and hope offered to God are the sacrifices that make of us all "a royal priesthood." The thousands of people who entered the church this past Easter and the millions who live and hand on the faith do so not because a particular bishop, pastor or teacher is virtuous, but because they find Christ, who leads us along the path to truth and life."

[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=1718](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=1718)

**Rev Beth Quick** - How did Stephen go from being such a servant to being the first to give his life for his faith in Jesus? It turns out that Stephen was a rowdy synagogue member. He wasn't content to just go with the flow or keep quiet in his own community of faith.  
<http://bethquick.com/sermon4-24-05.htm>