

that there is a truth about the Father which Jesus must learn and then pass on; he is the truth himself: it is not the case that the Father has eternal life which he will give to the Son when the Son reaches home, so that the Son can then bestow life, he is the life himself. And no other approach to the Father can be made than the one which has been opened in the incarnation of the eternal Word.

The gospel of St John / John Marsh. 1968. p.504³

Related topics

For further study:

Symbol of the church; christology; paschal mystery; baptism; mystery of the church; service and servanthood

Closing Prayer

We have beheld your glory, O God,
in the face of Christ Jesus your Son.

Enliven our faith,
that through Christ we may put our trust in you.

Deepen our faith,
that in Christ we may serve you.

Complete our faith,
that one day we may live with you
in that place which Christ prepares for us,
where he lives with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Opening prayers, Easter 5A⁴

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³ *The gospel of Saint John / John Marsh.* – Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1968. – (The Pelican Gospel Commentaries).

⁴ *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary / International Commission on English in the Liturgy.* – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999,

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Principal Service readings

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| Acts 7.55-60 | The stoning of Stephen |
| Psalms 31.1-5,[15-16] | Prayer at time of trial |
| 1 Peter 2.2-10 | Living stones, in a spiritual house |
| John 14.1-14 | Jesus, the Way, Truth, and Life; believe; 'ask in my name' |

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

A farewell discourse

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.' ⁵Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' ⁶Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

⁸Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' ⁹Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"?' ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the

Father. ³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.'

John 14.1-14 NRSV¹

Comments and Questions

The setting of this discourse is the Last Supper. Jesus has just warned of the betrayal that will take place and then speaks about being glorified (13.31). Now he wants to give the disciples confidence that they can put their trust in him, and so he says, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled' (14.1). He speaks about his own departure, and that he is going to prepare a place where the disciples will one day join him. How do you think of that place? Jesus encourages his disciples by telling them that they already know the way to this place. Unfortunately, the effect of his words makes them feel more anxious and Thomas says: 'Lord, we don't know where you are going; how can we know the way?' Then Jesus tells them that the answer can be found in himself: 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' It is not a way of knowledge but a way of trust. The key to finding the way is trust in the person of Jesus. Jesus uses an 'I am' statement. 'I am the way' is saying that Jesus is the incarnate reality of 'I am' – the name of God (see Exodus 3.14). 'I am the truth' is saying that Jesus is trustworthy and can be relied on – he knows what he is talking about. 'I am the life' is saying that through Jesus eternal life is granted. The profound truth is that in Jesus God himself is known. Thomas is troubled, uncertain, but Jesus is very confident. How do his words encourage you in your faith? The next person to question Jesus is Philip. Philip had been accompanying Jesus during his time of ministry. He had introduced Nathanael to Jesus; he had witnessed the feeding of the multitudes. Now he asks to be shown the Father. He doesn't seem to understand who Jesus was. So Jesus reiterates that he and the Father are one, that the Father is revealed in and through Jesus. Jesus then looks beyond his current disciples and says that future disciples will do even greater works than he himself has done. It is a visionary perception.

¹ *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Quotations

1

Because he did not begin to save and transfigure the world with the superficial symptoms but started with its innermost root, we creatures of the surface think that nothing has happened. Because the waters of suffering and guilt are still flowing where we are standing, we think the deep sources from which they spring are not yet dried up. Because wickedness is still inscribing its runes of the face of the earth, we conclude that in the deepest heart of reality love is extinct. But all that is mere appearance, the appearance which we take to be the reality of life. He has risen because in death he conquered and redeemed forever the innermost center of all earthly reality. And having risen, he has held fast to it. And so he has remained. When we confess him as having ascended to God's heaven, that is only another expression for the fact that he withdraws from us for awhile the tangible manifestation of his glorified humanity and above all that there is no longer any abyss between God and the world.

The great church year / Karl Rahner. 1993, p.196²

2

Putting down the book, I said: "Listen, it revolts me to think that God sent His Son to say to us: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' with the fine result then that all of us find ourselves in the situation of those blind men, each with a wretched little fragment of the truth in his hand, each fragment different from the others. We know the truth of the faith only by analogy, yes; but blind to this degree, no! It seems to me unworthy both of God and of our reason!" This unexpected theology based on elephants' tails and backs did not completely convince my guest, but it shook him, making him say: "Well, nobody had ever said this to me!"

Illustrissimi: Letters from Pope John Paul I / Pope John Paul I. 1976

3

It is not the case that Jesus is 'away' from the Father, and must therefore find and tread the way to him; he is the way himself: it is not the case

² *The great church year* / Karl Rahner. – New York : Crossroad, 1993.