

The Fifth Sunday in Easter Time

May 17/18, 2014

Year A

Acts 6:1-7

Sometimes the table is not equally shared: Some eat their fill while others are in want.

Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19

The dead will be delivered and the hungry satisfied because God is watching.

1 Peter 2:4-9

This house is alive!—made of living stones, chosen and precious.

John 14:1-12

A wonderful house with room enough for everyone: one definition of heaven.

"I am the way, the truth and the life..."

Jesus says these words in answer to Thomas. Thomas is asking Jesus how they can follow him when they don't know the way. Jesus responds with these words: "I am the way the truth and the life..." So, right away we interpret these words to mean something like: "My way is the way to heaven" or "Just follow what I have taught you." These words do suggest that.

In fact, if we accept this interpretation we would not be wrong. The path Jesus calls us to walk is the way to eternal life. But this statement really means so much more. Jesus is not just speaking of a life direction, but of the reality of his existence.

"I am the way..." Jesus way calls us to eternal life, but without him there is no way. Jesus is not the only one to teach about love of God and love of neighbour as the path to salvation. All throughout his public ministry Jesus is constantly quoting from the scriptures. The difference between his teaching and those of the prophets is that they were speaking about him. As well, throughout time, even to the present day, humanist philosophies have existed that express similar or even identical ideas. What they are all missing is Jesus.

Here Jesus is saying: "I am the way that all that I promise is possible." If the Son of God had not become human; not lived our human life; not suffered his passion and

crucifixion; died and rose and ascended into heaven, bringing our humanity with him to the Father, then none of what he promised would have been possible. Jesus is the way that God chose to redeem his creation and bring his children home. Jesus is “the way, the truth and the life” for all humanity. Because the Son of God became one of us, we are transformed.

We are transformed into the living stones, St. Peter writes about in the second reading. We are the living stones that build a spiritual house, a holy priesthood.

Our first reading today, as you might imagine, holds a particular importance to all deacons. This is the story of the founding of the diaconate. The word deacon itself comes from the Greek word for “servant”. The deacon is ordained in the image of Christ the Servant. As Jesus tells us, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

But, as many of you may already know, the Permanent Diaconate was only re-instituted by the church following the Second Vatican Council. For several centuries it had been lost as a separate vocation, and had been reduced to one of the steps in the formation for the priesthood. In the light of St. Peter’s Epistle today this takes on a much larger meaning.

Whether ordained or not, Jesus taught that we should follow his example as the servant of all. “If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, then you also should wash each other’s feet.” We are all called to serve. We are all called to a diaconate as people of God.

There is an interesting parallel here because just as for hundreds of years the ministry of deacon was existed only as a part of the formation of a priest. Through service to our sisters and brothers, wherever, however and in whatever circumstance we may encounter them, we walk the path by which we become St. Peter’s “royal priesthood”, the living stones that build up the Body of Christ on Earth. Our service, our diaconate, whether ordained or not, forms us as we seek to live out the priesthood of our baptism.

“I am the way, the truth and the life.” Jesus told his disciples this at the last supper. At that same meal he said “I am in the Father and the Father is in me...” This is a most profound statement especially in light of fact that it was at this meal that Jesus instituted the Eucharist. If He is in the Father and the Father is in him, then when we share in his body and blood we are sharing in the fullness of the Divine Trinity – the love of the Father for the Son, the Son for the Father and their love for the Holy Spirit.

This is what we are called to share each time we come to the table of the Lord. Just as Jesus takes our humanity with him when he ascends to the Father, he brings the

Father and the Spirit when he comes to us in the Eucharist. So as we come to receive the sacrament of our salvation let us proclaim our "Amen" with joy and confidence in God's love, given to us in Jesus, "...the Way, the Truth and the Life..." **AMEN**

