

# READINGS, REFLECTION AND PRAYERS FOR 4th SUNDAY OF EASTER

(from the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference Mass Readings  
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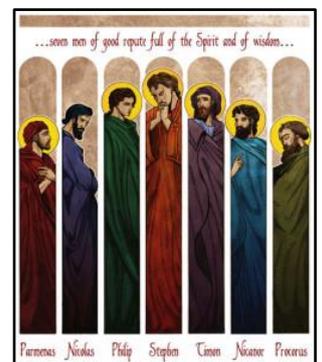
## *Introduction*

No one can come to the Father except through Christ. Working together in love, all God's people can build up the kingdom in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our high priest.

## **A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 6:1-7**

*They elected seven men full of the Holy Spirit*

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, Parmentas, 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.

The Word of the Lord.

**Responsorial Psalm**                      *Ps 32*

**Response: MAY YOUR LOVE BE UPON US, O LORD,  
AS WE PLACE ALL OUR HOPE IN YOU.**

1. 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.

*Response*

2. 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.

*Response*

3. 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.

*Response*

**A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF ST PETER 2:4-9**

*You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood*

He 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.  
No one can come to the Father except through me.' *Jn 14: 10*

**A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 14:1-12**

*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.*

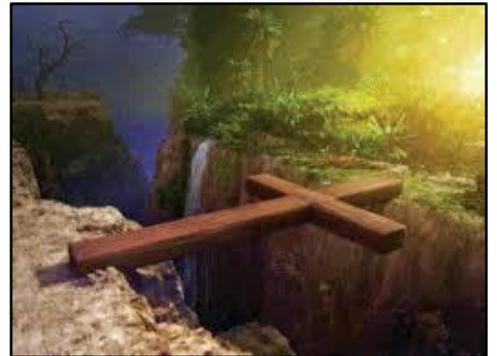
Jesus said to his disciples

‘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.’

Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

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## REFLECTION

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust in me.’ In every age, worries beset us. From New Zealand to Norway, we are grieving for how the global pandemic has inflicted death and devastation. Economists predict dire financial and unemployment statistics to come. People who were victims of the bush fires and the drought have become victims a second time. Some people are struggling with other circumstances as well.

What does Jesus mean when he says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled”? He wasn’t being superficial as he himself had recently been shaken by the death of his friend Lazarus. As well, when he spoke these words, he was stirred up facing his own betrayal and death.

How can we in our community nourish one another in the trust Jesus spoke of? When the CoVid lockdown is lifted, we will be in ‘changed’ times rather than back to ‘normal’ times. To be superficial, disrespectful or impractical would be insulting and disastrous. Physical, financial and other considerations may limit what we or others can do.

However, today’s readings focus on the strength we can be for others as we continue to grow in faith, hope and love – as individuals and as a community. This strength will inform how we respond to people in our families, parish and local community, and beyond.

The Acts of the Apostles describes the choosing of seven to distribute food to those in need. It was not just a story about organizing a group of helpers in the community. It was about what is intrinsic to being a Christian. We need to hear the Word of God and we also need to serve the needy both within and beyond our community.

We need to learn from the Scriptures – as individuals and as a community – not only to grow as good people but for us to grow in and live with Christian faith. We need to make time to be nourished in God’s Dream, to learn from Jesus, the Revelation of God. Sacramental Priests need time to prepare the Word of God for us and we parishioners need time for learning how to love our world with God’s Word.

The deacon or servant who nourishes the needy is no mere functionary. Rather, in our service we need to be recreating the world in the image of God. God calls each of us to do that somehow in our own circumstances – in our homes, workplaces, parish community, local community and beyond. The Church has a name for people who have been baptized - ‘priests of the Kingdom of God’. That means we take God’s Word out to people probably most often by our example, sometimes by our words. As individuals and together, we also welcome people, including the outsiders, into our community’s faith in Jesus, the Revelation of God.

A virus, invisible to our eyes, has brought so much visible destruction around us. The faith, hope and love with which we can share in the life of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is also invisible to our eyes. However, the effects of God’s blessings upon all creation are visible and transformative for all. Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust God and trust me.” Let’s go on!