



Christ in Our Neighborhood

May 7, 2023

Prayer

Commentary

Almighty and ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery with-in us, that those You were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under Your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**2nd Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-9**

## 5th Sunday of Easter

St. Peter tells us that Jesus is the Cornerstone of the Church. As “living stones” we are called to be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, and to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ Jesus.

To build a spiritual house the Church needs living stones. Living stones are alive and full of the Holy Spirit. You are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Commentary

**1st Reading: Acts 6:1-7**

There was much work to be done as the early Church began to grow and there was a need for more helpers. The community selected seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, for the Apostles to appoint to this task. The Apostles prayed and laid hands on them, thus ordaining them as the first deacons of the Church. Among them were Stephen who was the first martyr of the Church (Acts 7:54-60) and Phillip who later baptized the people of Samaria and elsewhere (Acts 8: 4-17). The title of “deacon” simply means “servant.” Although not everyone is ordained as a deacon, by our baptism each of us are each called to the *diakonia*, the Greek term meaning the “service of others.”

To those with faith, Jesus is the Cornerstone and the firm foundation of His Church. For those who do not believe, Jesus is a stumbling block and foolishness.

We are the living stones of Christ’s Church!

Question

- How do you see yourself as a living stone for the building up of Christ’s Church?
- Have there been times when your faith in Christ has been a stumbling block or viewed as foolishness to others?

Question

How are you called to the service of others? What do you do for the service of others? What do you do for the good of the Church?

How will you bring someone back to Church today?

Visit [dphx.org/christ-in-our-neighborhood](http://dphx.org/christ-in-our-neighborhood) for free Scripture reflections for small groups. Then, invite a friend, family member or neighbor to join you and break open God's Word together!

Used with Permission. All rights reserved. Christ in Our Neighborhood © is a Scripture program designed by Bishop John Dolan of the Diocese of Phoenix. This free program may be found online at [dphx.org/christ-in-our-neighborhood](http://dphx.org/christ-in-our-neighborhood). Download free PDFs for your parish groups or family gatherings.

## Commentary

### Gospel: John 14:1-12

During the Last Supper Jesus told his disciples “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me.” He said he is going on before them to prepare a place for them in His Father’s house. He says, “if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going, you know the way.”

Feeling uncertain, Thomas asked, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?”

Before the Church was called Catholic and disciples were called Christians, the early Church was referred to as “The Way” based upon Jesus’s response to Thomas’ question, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

The Way to the Father is Jesus. In Him, with Him, and through Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we the Church journey together on our earthly pilgrimage to the Father’s house.

Then Jesus adds, “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in Me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”

## Question

- Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” What causes your heart to be troubled?
- Jesus is expecting great things of us. What are the challenges and opportunities of today’s disciple?

## This Week’s Task

Talk to a friend or family member about your personal experience of following the Way of Christ.

## Group Prayer

The leader invites the group to pray the following words together.

**“Do not let  
your hearts  
be troubled.  
You have faith  
in God; have  
faith also in  
Me.”**

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Way, the Truth and the Life. Teach us, Lord, your way that we may walk in your truth and life, single-hearted and revering your name. We praise you with all our heart, glorifying your name forever, our Lord and our God. Amen.

The leader will guide the group in praying Psalm 33 (from the 5th Sunday of Easter)

## Psalm

**Psalm Response: Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.**

Exult, you just, in the LORD; praise from the upright is fitting. Give thanks to the LORD on the harp; with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises.

**R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.**

Upright is the word of the LORD, and all his works are trustworthy. He loves justice and right; of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

**R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.**

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope for his kindness, to deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine.

**R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.**

**Conclude with an Our Father**