

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

Year A

Acts 6:1-7  
Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19  
I Peter 2:4-9  
John 14:1-12

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Are you familiar with the story of the man wandering through the streets of Manhattan looking for Carnegie Hall? When he finally gave in and asked a stranger “Excuse me, can you tell me how I can get to Carnegie Hall?” The response he received was, “Practice, practice, practice.” This story comes to mind when someone driving on, say, Montgomery Ave stop and ask me how to get to Villanova....I am tempted to say, “Study, a lot”. Or perhaps you may give directions similarly to the way some of the people near my first assignment as a priest would give directions. They were always in the habit of indicating directions by including what used to be there... For instance, “You go down to the corner where Daher shoes used to be and take a left.”

As we can see, there are various ways of giving directions and in today’s gospel, we hear the words of Jesus in response to Thomas’ question.. “How can we know the way?” Jesus responds, “I am the way and the truth and the life...no one comes to the Father except through me.” So we hear that Jesus Christ is the way....but the way to where? To the Father...., and then we hear Christ say, “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” So Jesus Christ and the Father are one.... And because of this, the goal, the end, is also the Way. The very direction on how to get there is the destination.

The apostles were called, therefore, to believe in Christ “the way, the truth and the life” Along with the Apostles, we also are called to this belief. To believe in Christ, the Christ who we celebrate as the Risen One each time we celebrate the Eucharist together and who is especially remembered as we continue in this Easter Season is the Christ in whom we place our belief. Christ is the way the truth and the life.

Our belief in the Risen Christ, however, demands a response on our part. We cannot help but respond to that profession of faith because of Jesus’ words at the end of this gospel passage we heard. “...whoever believes in me will do the works that I do.” Our reading from the Acts of the Apostles reminds us of the growth of ministry and the increase of the performance of the works of Christ within the early Christian Community. The need for both the ministry of the word and the ministry of serving the poor and at table was the impetus for the formation of selecting the seven assistants to the Twelve in performing the works of service. The whole community was involved in the choosing of representatives among them who focused their energy on service. The selection of these representatives was not so that the others in the community could relinquish their responsibility to be people of service; it was so that they could be examples to others on how to connect their faith and their good works of service. Every Christian, as a member

of the Body of Christ participates as the Body of Christ and therefore does the work of Christ. Just as Christ is the direction and the destination...the goal, or object of our belief, also becomes the practical reality of serving each other in good works. Each aspect is so intimately connected to the other that it becomes impossible to separate the two. That is how the command we heard in the first letter of Peter today, "let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood..." can make sense. The spiritual sacrifices we make, through Jesus Christ, are the works of the Father in response to our belief, our faith in Christ our way.

Let us therefore, spend some time this week reflecting on the times we may feel lost or without direction in our Christian journey and discover that it here in our celebration of the Eucharist where we can get our bearings straight. It is here where we are reminded of the Gospel promise of Christ, the Good News that promises "I am the way, the truth and the life." It is here where we are nourished on the bread of life. It is our celebration of the word and at the table that allows us, in fact, compels us, to reflect on our destination and our direction, our belief in Christ and our service in response to that belief. It is indeed our calling as a holy priesthood offering that spiritual sacrifice of our very lives acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.