

From: **St. Joseph's Catholic Church - Emmitsburg** mail@flocknote.com
Subject: Fr. Harry's Sunday Reflection for the Fifth Sunday of Easter - "Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled."
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We continue onward, ever deeper into the joy of the Easter Season. And the celebration of the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost gets nearer by the day.

And yet, on this fifth Sunday of Easter, the Gospel reading moves us backward. It returns us to the Last Supper. And the mood is grim.

As the Gospel begins, the disciples' hearts "are troubled" (John 14:1). Supper has finished. And now Jesus has just told His disciples that he is about to leave them. "Where I am going," He tells them, "you cannot follow now" (John 13:36).

The disciples are confused and terrified. What does Jesus mean? How can He leave them? After all, they have given up everything to follow Him.

They have placed their faith in Jesus. They have heard Him teach and have

witnessed His healings. They have even healed people in His name.

They believed that Jesus would save Israel. And now, they are left to imagine the unimaginable, life without Him. Worse yet, Jesus seems so calm. Doesn't He care?

Today's Gospel invites us to ask where Jesus is while we endure fear and confusion. How can we experience His Presence when He seems absent — when He has gone and we "cannot follow now" (John 13:36)?

We have asked so many other questions already during this global pandemic. Why did friends and loved ones get sick and die? Why couldn't we visit them and be close to them? And why no Mass? No funeral? What did we do wrong, that we have lost so much? Will we remain safe going forward?

What are we to do with yet another question?

Let's look at the Gospel. The disciples' first reaction is to demand clear and logical answers. They need to get their heads around the issue. Clarity and certainty, they believe, is the solution.

Thomas asks Jesus, "How can we know the way?" (John 14:5). He wants a roadmap with step-by-step guidance, with no chance for error. Philip asks, "Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us" (John 14:7). He wants the certainty of physical evidence, something he can label and define, as well as see and touch. He wants no room for doubt.

But this is not what the disciples need. They are mistaken. Why? Because they try to get Jesus to meet them in their heads — and not their hearts.

Jesus's response must have disappointed them. The only assurance He offers is that "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). He provides no roadmap nor any concrete proof.

Instead, all Jesus offers His disciples — and us today — is Himself.

He invites each of us into a relationship with Him. He doesn't offer the false security of definitions and rule books. Instead of certainty, He calls us to follow Him amid the messiness of our lives. He wants us to face the confusion, sadness, and pain of the world with Him.

He wants intimacy with us. And this intimacy can only happen if our hearts remain open and trust in Him. It can't happen if we retreat to our heads.

The intimate relationship Jesus offers is one that connects us with and in God the Father. He says, "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:11). Our relationship with Jesus creates a space for us to come to Him as we are right now. And it allows room for us to grow closer to the Father, even as we struggle with weakness and doubt.

This relationship with the Lord Jesus is what saves us.

So today, we confront so much that disturbs and frightens us. And here is Jesus's promise: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me" (John 14:1).

We pray that Jesus might touch our hearts that are troubled and struggle with doubt and fear. And we pray to find the peace that only the Risen Lord can provide.

We know how John's Gospel ends. Jesus's resurrection reveals the ultimate victory of God's love. God leaves no one behind. He will save us, even now.

Peace and God Bless.
Fr. Harry

P.S. Happy Mother's Day to all our mothers and all of the special women of our lives!



Sent by Fr. Harry

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