

**Fifth Sunday of Easter - A - 2023**  
**Acts 6.1-7///1Peter 2.4-9///John 14.1-12**

→one day a priest was asked to preach a retreat in a city in Florida...

→while he was there he decided to send a postcard back to his staff at the rectory....walking out of his hotel...he saw a young boy on a bike and asked him where the post office was

→the boy obliged by giving him directions to the post office

→the priest thanked him and then invited the boy to church that evening...he told him.... *“if you come to church tonight, I’ll tell you the way to get to heaven.”*

→the boy answered saying.... *“sorry but I don’t think I’ll be there.”*

→surprised the priest said... *“why not.”*

→the boy answered.... *“you don’t even know the way to the post office...how you going to get to heaven.”*

*PAUSE*

→today Jesus speaks to us of the way to heaven....and not surprisingly we are reminded that the way to heaven is not a street we can walk or drive down.

→the way to heaven can’t be found by google maps or a GPS either....

→[rather] as we all know...the way to heaven is by a person....Jesus himself...who today reminds us once again that he is the way, the truth and the life.

PAUSE

→today's gospel reading contains two significant and meaningful reminders of how Jesus is the way to heaven...

→Jesus tells his disciples and you and me [us]:

----"*I am going to prepare a place for you and then I will come back and take you with me....I will bring you home.*"

→but then we have Thomas questioning Jesus: "*we don't know what you are talking about and we do not know where you are going....how can we know the way?*"

→[and] Jesus responds very powerfully by saying: "***I am the way and the truth and the life***"

→but that answer is not good enough...because then

→Phillip decides to speak up: with the bright idea of saying, "*show us the Father and that will be enough for us*"...i.o.w....show us God and we will be satisfied

→and Jesus replies by saying: "I have been with you all this time and you still do not understand.....**you have seen the Father**...how can you say that....do you not believe."

→once again, as we have seen so many times before....the disciples weren't the sharpest knives in the door....because here we have J. offering them the way to eternal salvation, the way to eternal life,

→yet, what they weren't realizing is that they had an important part to play in all of this as well.

---i.o.w.....Jesus is offering the disciples an invitation to the table....to the table of eternal life...and, what they don't get is that with this invitation comes the understanding that they had to bring something as well to the table

→and that is the message of the reading for you and me today

→through our baptism...our belief in God...through our faith...we are being offered an invitation to enter the kingdom...in fact, every human being ever to walk the face of the earth has been offered this invitation....

→and sadly....today....so many people don't care to answer this invitation...they don't think it important enough...or they don't think it a priority to their eternal existence...

→[yet].....we continue to be offered this same invitation that Christ offers to his disciples

*PAUSE*

→so.....the challenge remains, not only to answer it.... but more so to ask "WHAT ARE WE GOING TO BRING," in response to God

→what do we have to offer in response to this invitation?

→we have already said yes by our baptism, by our faith, by our lives and presence here...

→Just as the disciples did...we too have said yes to the invitation.... but as Jesus points out that....that is simply not enough

→we need to offer something more in response

→our faith calls for a response on our part

→our membership in the church calls for a response on our part

and today Jesus in the gospel is calling us to respond

calling us to become his disciples....his followers..... his messengers to a world...that today isn't at times all that interested in hearing His message

*PAUSE*

→in a few short weeks we will celebrate the feast of Pentecost...a celebration of the gifts of the Spirit

→over the next few weeks we will be hearing a lot in the readings about the gifts we have to bear and offer to one another.

→[and so] the message today I believe is quite simple...Jesus is once again reminding us that we need to give the gifts we have to our faith...to the Church...to those in need...to one another

→[you see] it's just not enough to say I believe and leave it at that

→it's just not enough to say I belong and leave it at that

→it's just not enough to say I have faith...and not practice it

→it's not enough to say I'm a spiritual person but not religious....

→on the contrary....we are being asked to bring something to the table...\....to bring something **TO** the faith we profess

→and as we hear today.....the invitation is being sent....

→and we are being asked to respond.....

→[in the end] our response is what will make a difference, not only in the world and in the lives we live here and now....but in the dwelling place being prepared for us in God's eternal house.