



Celebrate

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2020

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As 1 Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Acts 7:55-60

Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the apostles to serve tables so that the apostles could be free to serve the word (Acts 6:1-6). Stephen does more than distribute food, however. For his preaching of God's word, he becomes the first martyr of the faith.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶"Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" ⁵⁷But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸Then they dragged him

out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.



In - to your hands, O LORD, I com - mend my spir - it.

In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be ¹ put to shame;
deliver me ¹ in your righteousness.

²**Incline your ¹ ear to me;
make haste to de- ¹ liver me.**

³Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag ¹ and my stronghold;
for the sake of your name, lead ¹ me and guide me.

⁴**Take me out of the net that they have secretly ¹ set for me,
for you are my tow- ¹ er of strength. R**

⁵Into your hands I com- ¹ mend my spirit,
for you have redeemed me, O LORD, ¹ God of truth.

¹⁵**My times are ¹ in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who ¹ persecute me.**

¹⁶Let your face shine up- ¹ on your servant;
save me in your ¹ steadfast love. R

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:2-10

Christ is the cornerstone of God's saving work and the foundation of our lives. We are God's chosen, holy people who continuously celebrate and declare the mercy of God we experience through Jesus Christ.

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and
precious;
and whoever believes in him will not
be put to shame."

⁷To you then who believe, he is precious;

but for those who do not believe,

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the
corner,"

⁸and

"A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

¹⁰Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

Gospel

John 14:1-14

On the night that he is to be arrested, Jesus shares final words with his disciples. As the one through whom God is known, he promises to go before them and act on their behalf.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

⁸Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Build us up, mothering God, as living stones united in your spiritual house. Continually strengthen your church as it is sent forth to proclaim your love. We pray especially for new congregations and those in redevelopment. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Humble us, creator God, as part of your creation. Fill us with respect and awe for the world you have made, including volcanoes, ocean currents, tropical rainstorms, glaciers, and other forces that both destroy and create. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Align our ways to your love, O God. We pray for countries, leaders, and other organizations as they prepare places for those seeking refuge and safety (*aid organizations may be named*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of healing and rest, help those whose hearts are heavy and weighed down by many troubles. Comfort their suffering, ease their distress, and carry their burdens (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Nurturing God, we pray for those who tend and teach young children, for the safe pregnancies of expectant parents, and for families who struggle with infertility and miscarriage. We give thanks for all who have shown mothering care, and we remember all for whom this day is difficult. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Generous God, you call into your brilliant light all who have died. Give us faith to take hold of the promise of your eternal life. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 102:1-17. **Tuesday** Proverbs 3:5-12. **Wednesday** John 8:31-38. **Thursday** (Matthias, Apostle) Luke 6:12-16. **Friday** Genesis 7:1-24. **Saturday** John 14:27-29. **Sixth Sunday of Easter** Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21.

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