

**SPIRITUALITY**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

John 14:6

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the way, the truth and the life, says the Lord;  
no one comes to the Father, except through me.

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel** John 14:1-12; L52A

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.

You have faith in God; have faith also in me.

In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.

If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

And 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.”

Thomas said to him,

“Master, we do not know where you are going;

how can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you know me, then you will also know my Father.

From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him,

“Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time

and you still do not know me, Philip?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?



**Reflecting on the Gospel**

No GPS or road map can show us the way to the Father, the truth of all that is, the Life that is offered. Only Jesus can. He is our “GPS”: God’s Presence through the Spirit. Thomas and Philip completely miss Jesus’ point. They are looking for a road map—they ask Jesus to show them the way. They haven’t grasped what they have encountered all along: Jesus is “the way and the truth and the life.”

When asked “how can we know the way?” to the Father’s house, Jesus does not provide us a road map. Instead Jesus’ answer is a surprisingly personal one: “I

*am* the way and the truth and the life.” Here Jesus himself is equated with risen Life. Believing in Jesus and doing his works is the way to the Father. We today must encounter and come to know Jesus in our daily living, and by so identifying with him become for others “the way and the truth and the life.”

Jesus’ claim to be “the way and the truth and the life” lays claims on us: to have faith in him, to follow him to the Father, to do the works he does, to *be* who he is—“the way and the truth and the life.” With the first disciples we, too, struggle to understand these claims and the implications they have for changing the way we live. Jesus makes clear that the only way to eternal Life is through belief in him. It seems like such simple, clear directions. Yet we spend our whole lives coming to the kind of believing that truthfully shows us the way.

Jesus’ disclosure about himself requires, in turn, an equally personal response from us: “have faith . . . *in me*.” Easter faith is more than creed; it is expressed in a relationship with the risen One. The ongoing struggle to

believe more deeply is the ongoing struggle to come to know Jesus and become more like him. This risen Jesus is not elusive; he is encountered in the “ministry of the word,” in the breaking of bread, in taking care of the needs of others (see first reading), in allowing God to act in us to build us into a “chosen and precious” Body of Christ, in our announcing God’s praises (see second reading). The real challenge of this gospel, then, is to expand our seeing and believing to recognize the many, varied, and surprising ways Jesus comes to us. And to become for others those ways.

Jesus says to Thomas, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” Jesus is the way: he is the path to the Father. Jesus is the truth: he is the revelation of who God is. Jesus is the life: he is risen Life for all those who believe in him. Believing is “believing”—surrendering ourselves to him in all we are and in all we do. Through him and with him and in him *we* become “the way and the truth and the life.”

**Living the Paschal Mystery**

Jesus’ claim that he is “the way and the truth and the life” is a sweeping one that dares us to see Jesus as everything we need to come to the fullness of risen Life ourselves. The “way” is not always appealing—dying to ourselves, self-giving for the sake of others. The good news and truth is that we follow Jesus’ way in less dramatic, everyday ways. Our simple acts of reaching out to others, alleviating their suffering, or eliminating their need (whatever it might be) is how we follow Jesus’ way. But more: this is how we ourselves become the way! As we do Jesus’ works, we become more like him—we take on his care, his love, his passion for others. As we do his works, we ourselves become the way to the Father for others. No greater work can we do!

*Continued in Appendix A, p. 291.*

### Focusing the Gospel

**Key words and phrases:** I am the way and the truth and the life, whoever believes in me

**To the point:** Jesus says to Thomas, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” Jesus is the way: he is the path to the Father. Jesus is the truth: he is the revelation of who God is. Jesus is the life: he is risen Life for all those who believe in him. Believing is “be-living”—surrendering ourselves to him in all we are and in all we do. Through him and with him and in him *we* become “the way and the truth and the life.”

### Connecting the Gospel

**to the second reading:** Peter reminds us that we have been called “out of darkness into . . . wonderful light.” We are the light of Christ because the Holy Spirit dwells within us, enabling us to be the Presence of the risen Lord (“the way and the truth and the life”) for others.

**to experience:** We often become like someone we know well and love. We pick up their way of thinking and of behaving. To know well and love Jesus is to become his way, his truth, his life.

### Connecting the Responsorial Psalm

**to the readings:** With its cry for mercy, the refrain for this Sunday’s responsorial psalm sounds more fitting for the season of Lent than Easter. But it captures well one of the realities which the Lectionary movement from the resurrection appearances of Jesus (first three Sundays of Easter) to Good Shepherd Sunday (fourth) to the departure of Jesus (Ascension) and the mission given us to continue his work (Pentecost) embodies: that we will always struggle with discipleship. The first reading reveals that even those historically close to the resurrection of Jesus quickly experienced rifts and conflicts among themselves. From the earliest days the church has needed God’s mercy and direction if she was to remain faithful to her mission to be God’s holy ones (second reading).

The psalm assures that God gives us all we need to be faithful: an “upright” word, “trustworthy” works, and a “kindness” which reaches the ends of the earth. The gospel adds the revelation that these marvelous gifts of God abide in the very *person* of Jesus, in whom the Father “dwells” and “is doing his works.” We need only to trust in him who is the way, the truth, and the life.

**to psalmist preparation:** These verses from Psalm 33 convey utmost trust in God whose word is true, whose works are reliable, and whose kindness is granted to all who hope. In the gospel Jesus invites you to place this trust in him, for whoever knows him knows God. How has your celebration of this Easter season helped you grow in your knowledge of the risen Jesus? What struggles with faith in him do you still experience? Who/what helps you to trust in him even in the midst of these struggles?

### ASSEMBLY & FAITH-SHARING GROUPS

- Jesus is *my* way, truth, and life because . . . I am *his* way, truth, and life when . . .
- What helps me believe in Jesus is . . . What hinders my believing in Jesus is . . .
- When I surrender myself to Jesus, my “be-living” looks like . . .

### PRESIDERS

Where others can truly see/know the Father in seeing/knowing me is . . . Conversely, where my ministry and living fall short in showing the Father is . . .

### DEACONS

My diaconal service models for others the *way* of Jesus by . . .

### HOSPITALITY MINISTERS

My manner of welcoming the community to liturgy opens them to see and know Jesus and the Father when I . . .

### MUSIC MINISTERS

When I surrender myself more fully to Jesus, my music ministry becomes . . .

### ALTAR MINISTERS

My manner of serving at the altar shows others a way to the Father when . . .

### LECTORS

I proclaim the truth of God’s word when I . . .

### EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion makes visible Jesus as the way and the truth and the life in that . . .

## Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 14, 2017

### Gospel (cont.)

John 14:1-12; L52A

The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. 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.”