

Fifth Sunday of Easter – May 10, 2020

Acts 6: 1-7 – 1 Peter 2: 4-9 – John 14: 1-12

Over these months of a challenging and disorienting way of living brought about by a world-wide pandemic, there has been an expression that has been heard and printed in various places and forms: “We’re in this together.” All of us, in some way or another, whether we like it or not, are affected by this virus and its repercussion. “We are all in this together.”

As we know, there are objections and complaints about various steps that have been taken, various behavior modifications we have been called upon to adopt. But, nothing is new. This is evident if we consider, in particular, the passage from the Acts of the Apostles read today. As much as the early Christians adopted a way of living in which they sought to support one another, still there were complaints about how this lifestyle was carried out. Thus, the Apostles and other leaders of the community had to address the issue and come up with a solution.

It is a very basic, ver fundamental understanding that developed within the life of the early Church that the loving action of God was on behalf of all mankind and was to be extended to everyone without distinction. In becoming man in Jesus Christ, God took on human flesh, human nature, in its totality, with the exception of sin. In dying on the cross, Jesus Christ reconciled all of mankind to God, not just a few,

not just one people or another – all peoples. In overcoming death in the Resurrection, Christ the Lord invite all of humanity to share in the defeat of sin that his rising from the dead had accomplished..

If God, in the person of Jesus Christ, did this on behalf of all persons, then the response is to be made by all, together, one with Christ as his Body now present in the world. This can be understood from the dialogue heard in the Gospel read for today. Thomas asked: “Show us the way.” It is, as if he has not yet understood. Jesus replies: “I am the way.” He is showing that basic truths about life and living is found in his ministry and teaching: a way of living that reflects restoration and reconciliation. To Philip’s question Jesus gives a response that suggest that it still has not registered that what God is, who God is, how God can be known, is through a true uniting of our lives in and with Jesus Christ.

It is that way, that truth, that life, that Jesus, in his life and ministry, declared. It is this way, this truth and this life, that is to be found in us, all together as, as the Body of Christ in our world today. Especially is this true as we confront this calamity of the pandemic.

That we are all together is illustrated for us today by Peter in his letter as illustrated by him in a quite graphic way. We are like a building, a structure that is visible and functional. Christ is the cornerstone, the essential building block that allows the structure to exist. We are visible parts, visible components, of this building. As part of this structure our faith can be experienced in us as: priests – the intermediaries, the go-betweens, in service to one another; as holy – reflecting the goodness of God to one another; as set

apart – clearly visible, recognizable and effective with one another.

Indeed, we are in this together. We do not live our faith only as individuals. It is basic to our Christian faith that we live it in relationship to the faith of others, that we affect others and others affect us. We live out our faith as a genuine Communion of Saints, relying on one another, respecting one another, supporting one another. We recognize that it is in this building, this visible Body of Christ we are today, that our world comes to know and experience our truly good and gracious God.