

Homily—Prayer of the Faithful—Sunday Readings

5th SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 10, 2020

“I am way, the truth, and the life”. We owe a debt of gratitude to St Thomas for this declaration of Jesus in today’s Gospel. Thank you St Thomas! If you had not said to Jesus, *“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”* We would never have had this declaration of Jesus for all the ages.

Jesus says to Thomas and to us, *“I AM”*. In saying this, Jesus intends us to know that he is God. This was the revelation of God to Moses in the burning bush. Moses had asked God, *“What if the people ask me who it is has sent me to them, what am I to say?”* God told him to say, *“I am has sent me to you”*. This is the name of God: *“I AM”*. In Hebrew it is *“Yahweh”*. What is the meaning of this name? *“I AM”* simply means God is uncreated existence; the One who never had a beginning and will never have an end. Every other thing in the universe is created, has a beginning and will have an end, including you and I. Only God is Existence itself. We are merely created existence, dependent existence.

In this Gospel of St John, John records seven *“I AM”* sayings of Jesus. Clearly, the Lord Jesus wants us to have no doubt concerning who he is.

The first one in chapter 6 is, *“I am the bread of life”*. Why Bread? Bread represents food. Food is required for the life of our physical bodies. But Jesus is not referring to the body, he is thinking of eternal life which is why in verse 40 of this chapter he tells us if we believe in him we will have eternal life. How is this to be accomplished? Further on In verse 54 he tells us that all we have to do is to *“eat his flesh and drink his blood”*. This is the holy Eucharist. He is telling us, that if we want to have life, eternal life, then we must eat his body and drink his blood. The words of St Ignatius of Antioch expands on this when, speaking of the Eucharist, he says, it *“is the medicine of immortality and the antidote against death....”*

The second *“I AM”* saying is in chapter 8 where Jesus says, *“I am the light of the world”*. Why Light? If we enter a dark house with the lights off, we become like someone who is blind and cannot see the way; we become fearful, afraid that we will fall; the darkness brings to our minds fearful imaginary things. If we are in sin our souls are in darkness, we are confined to our human limits, we are lost in a maze of paths that lead to more and more confusion. Fortunately for us, *“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”* These words of Isaiah have come true in Christ Jesus. He rescues us from our darkness, sets us free from the prison of our human limitations—opens for us an escape route that transcends ourselves. He is our light. Speaking of this light St Augustine said, *“In my deepest wound I saw your glory and it dazzled me.”*

“I am the gate for the sheep” is the third *“I AM”* saying in John’s Gospel. We heard this one in last Sunday’s Gospel from chapter 10. In today’s Gospel he says, *“I am the way...”*. He is the doorway for the sheep, for you and I, to enter into life eternal. God’s way, not our way is the path to eternal life. We need to pay attention to this if we are seeking union with him. St Chantel suggest a way for us to do this, *“Hold your eyes on God and leave the doing to Him. That is all the doing you have to worry about.”*

Homily—Prayer of the Faithful—Sunday Readings

5th SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 10, 2020

In this same chapter 10 Jesus tell us the 4th “I AM” saying, *“I am the good shepherd”*. Sheep as animals are nervous, easily confused, get lost very quickly, and are defenceless against wolves. A shepherd protects them from all these dangers. Jesus gives us this beautiful image to illustrate his powerful care for us. He is the good shepherd who protects us from all spiritual dangers. St Therese of Lisieux speaks to this loving care of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, in these words: “Jesus has shown me the only way that leads me to the fire of divine love—it is that of a little child who, full of trust, falls asleep in its father’s arms”.

“I am the resurrection and the life” follows in chapter 11 and is the 5th “I AM” saying of the Lord. The word “resurrection” through our over familiarity with it sometimes loses its meaning for us. But—the word “life” is real for us, it is at the heart of our existence. We cannot imagine not existing. Dying is a terrible reality for us so much so that we try not to think of it; If we are forced to confront it, fear is our normal reaction; when we experience the loss of a loved one through death we are devastated. In Jesus’ resurrection, death is defeated. Everlasting life is established. One of us, Jesus, has defeated our greatest enemy—death. The Resurrection of this one man offers “life” eternal to all of us in Baptism. How can this be? It can be because this one man is “I AM”, the eternal existence with no beginning and no end—death has no power over him. In this chapter 11 of John’s Gospel Jesus says to Martha, *“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”* Martha answered, “Yes Lord...!” Martha and Mary, her sister, and Lazarus, her brother, were Jesus’ friends. They enjoyed a simple, beautiful relationship with Him. Jesus wants to have this simple relationship with you and I. Fr William Casey put it this way: “Every time I hear a TV evangelist emphasize a personal relationship with Christ, I thank God that I am a Catholic. For only here can I receive the Lord—body, blood, soul and divinity. It doesn’t get more personal than that”.

The 6th “I AM” saying of Jesus is in today’s Gospel: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”* We have covered most of it already so we go to the 7th.

The 7th and final “I AM” saying, *“I am the true vine”*, is found in chapter 15 of St John. The essential meaning of this statement is found in the following verse where Jesus says we are the branches of the vine. He continues on to say that if we remain in him and bear fruit these will be the results: his Father will be glorified; we will dwell in his love; joy, his joy, will be in our lives. St John Paul II put it this way, “Life with Christ is a wonderful adventure.”

I Am Who I Am
I Am Existence
I Am All-Powerful
I Am God Your God

Homily—Prayer of the Faithful—Sunday Readings

5th SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 10, 2020

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Leader:

Let us beg our Lord to hear our prayer for all
who are in need.

LECTOR: Risen Lord, Hear Our Prayer

Show your Church how to preach the Word and serve
our neighbour during this time of separation and crisis:

We pray...

Give our leaders Wisdom in leading us to the return to work,
school and Church.

We pray...

Let our mothers see that you are present to them, so that they
may gladly surrender their cares into Jesus' hands:

We pray...

Reveal yourself to everyone as the way, the truth, and the life:

We pray...

Bless those who are sacrificing themselves for the sick and elderly;
bring security to those without the means to support their families;
watch over those who work in essential services and protect them:

We pray...

Risen Christ visit the sick with healing power and new hope:
(especially) Candelabra Ferolino; Munchie Reyes; Aisha Miranda;
Rodolfo Macapagal; Marie James; _____

We pray...

Bless all who have died in your Christ (especially): those who have died
from the virus; and also, Fr Michael Hawkins; Fr Basil O'Brien; _____

We pray...

In our silence now, let the light of your presence shine in us (PAUSE):

We Pray...

Leader:

God of all,
you sent your only Son to a sinful people
and he shows us the way back to you.
Help us always to keep his way firmly in our sights
as we make these prayers to you in his name,
Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen.

Homily—Prayer of the Faithful—Sunday Readings

5th SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 10, 2020

SUNDAY READINGS

First reading

Acts 6:1-7 ©

They elected seven men full of the Holy Spirit

About this time, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenists made a complaint against the Hebrews: in the daily distribution their own widows were being overlooked. So the Twelve called a full meeting of the disciples and addressed them, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food; you, brothers, must select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will hand over this duty to them, and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word.' The whole assembly approved of this proposal and elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of the Lord continued to spread: the number of disciples in Jerusalem was greatly increased, and a large group of priests made their submission to the faith.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 32(33):1-2,4-5,18-19

Second reading

1 Peter 2:4-9 ©

Christ is the living stone, chosen by God and precious to him

The Lord is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house. As scripture says: See how I lay in Zion a precious cornerstone that I have chosen and the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed. That means that for you who are believers, it is precious; but for unbelievers, the stone rejected by the builders has proved to be the keystone, a stone to stumble over, a rock to bring men down. They stumble over it because they do not believe in the word; it was the fate in store for them.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

Gospel Acclamation

Jn14:6

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.'

Homily—Prayer of the Faithful—Sunday Readings

5th SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 10, 2020

No one can come to the Father except through me.'

Alleluia!

Gospel

John 14:1-12 ©

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God still, and trust in me.

There are many rooms in my Father's house;

if there were not, I should have told you.

I am going now to prepare a place for you,

and after I have gone and prepared you a place,

I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am

you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

No one can come to the Father except through me.

If you know me, you know my Father too.

From this moment you know him and have seen him.'

Philip said, 'Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,' said Jesus to him 'and you still do not know me?

'To have seen me is to have seen the Father,

so how can you say, "Let us see the Father"?

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

The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself:

it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work.

You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;

believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason.

I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me

will perform the same works as I do myself,

he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father.'