

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God our Father,
you want more
than anything else
to share with us
all the good things of your life.
That is why you sent Jesus
to tell us about it
and show us the way.
So when we get tired
of doing good deeds,
make us strong
and determined again,
and help us to believe in you
more and more.
We pray this prayer
through Christ our Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

There is not a direct relationship between the two readings for today. The first reading recounts the appointment of seven men to take care of the daily, physical needs of the community. In fact they (Philip and Stephen) also preach the Word. The most probable focus of the reading is the easing of the tension between the Greek and Jewish Christians. The apostles try to solve this by appointing Greek leaders.

The Gospel, part of the last discourse of Jesus, focuses on Jesus as the revelation of God. We, like Thomas and Philip, long to "see" God. We cannot easily relate to a faceless, voiceless God. Jesus is the face and voice of God. In Jesus, and all he says and does, we see and know God.

FIRST READING: Acts 6:1-7

This is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Every day more and more people were becoming disciples. Soon some of them, those who spoke Greek, complained to the apostles that some of the widows were not being taken care of and were not getting enough to eat. The apostles gathered the group of disciples together and said,

"Our main work is to preach the Word of God, and we can't stop doing that to hand out food. So choose seven people from your group, and we will ask them to take care of the food and see that it is given to those who need it. These seven people must be very wise and must be filled with the Holy Spirit. They must be people who are respected by the others. While they are doing their work, we will spend our time in prayer and in the ministry of the Word."

All the disciples liked this idea, and so they chose seven people.

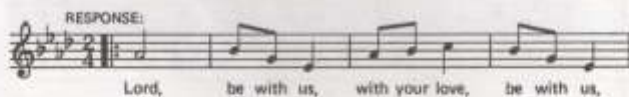
[Their names were Stephen (a man who had strong faith and was filled with the Holy Spirit), Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolaus.]

When they took these seven to the apostles, the apostles put their hands on them and prayed over them.

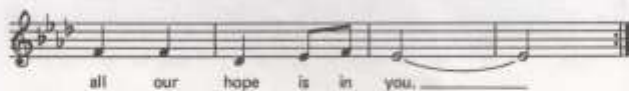
The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Psalm 33

RESPONSE:



Lord, be with us, with your love, be with us,



all our hope is in you.

VERSES:



1. For your faith - ful word and all you
2. () We are cho - sen, God, by

to Response



1. do, for your love we trust in you,
2. you, Bless us God, we trust in you.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

"I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life." Al - le - lu - ia! - lu - ia!

GOSPEL: *John 14:1-12*

This is a reading from the Gospel of John.

Jesus said to his disciples,

"Don't let your hearts be worried and upset.
You already believe in God; believe in me, too.
There are many rooms in my Father's house.
I am going now to prepare a place for you.
But I will come back,
and I will take you to be with me where I am.
And you know the way to the place
where I am going."

Thomas said to Jesus,

"Lord, we don't even know where you are going,
so how can we know the way?"

Jesus said,

"I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life.
Anyone who wants to come to the Father
must come through me."

[Then Philip said,

"Lord, show us the Father."

Jesus said,

"Philip, anyone who has seen me,
has seen the Father.
I am in the Father and the Father is in me.
You can believe me
because you see the things that I do.
And I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me
will be able to do the things that I do
and even greater things than I do
because I am going to the Father."]

The Gospel of the Lord.

[] Reader may omit text that appears in brackets.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

What did you hear?

That the Father and Jesus are one will not be a concept grasped by children. Today's Gospel provides us with the possibility of concentrating on Jesus as the way, rather than the oneness. You might use an example such as the following:

- Has your family ever taken a trip to a part of the country you have never seen before?
- Before a family begins such a journey, they must make many plans:
 1. They must decide where they want to go.
 2. They must know something about the journey so they will be prepared with the right things. (Wouldn't it be foolish to take only shorts and swim suits to Alaska?)
 3. They must pack up all the things they will need.
 4. And they must have a good map and follow it carefully to avoid becoming lost. If they follow the map and are well prepared, they can expect to enjoy their stay when they arrive.

We want to go to heaven to be with God where we will have life forever. But we have never been to heaven, and we have never seen God. Thomas and Philip had the same problem. When Jesus said he was going back to heaven and that he would come for us, they wanted to know the way to heaven, and they wanted to see God. Jesus said, "I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life." Jesus tells us what we need for our journey, and we know that he tells us the truth. Jesus shows us the way, and we will have a life of joy when we get to heaven.

What does Jesus mean when he says, "I am the way"? Help the children see that Jesus came to show us who God is. When we live the way Jesus lived because we believe in him, we are on the right way. Jesus tells us that we will be able to do even greater things than he has done because he will send us his Holy Spirit.

How can we live the way Jesus lived?