

5th Sunday of Easter Year A 2020 - The Cornerstone

St Peter tells us that we are *a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called us out of the darkness into his wonderful light*. So, how can one person's role or function in the community be better or worse than any other? Think about the Government! The Prime Minister is endowed with a role to lead and care for the whole nation. It is a key and decisive role that shapes the ethos and character of all the people he serves. Yet none of his decisions would be effective if there were not people to help him carry them out, and those people are many. If they fail to carry out their tasks, no matter how excellent the decision of the Prime Minister, it will be ineffective.

Think about this. The least paid and often least respected workers in the government, that keep it functioning, are the cleaners and service people. Without them the whole operation of the government would foul up in more ways than one. The role and importance of any member of the community is dependent on the support given by the community as a whole.

Lockdown is dependent on the *good will* of the people and it is encouraging to acknowledge the abundance and generosity of this *good will* to date. Acts reminds us of the role of the seven, chosen to be helpers (*the service industry*) that include Stephen and Philip. It is only because of their service that the apostles were left free to preach the Good News. In their service they fostered prayer and reflection on the Good News that also filled them with wisdom. They too were preaching through both Word and Action; but action came first.

In our service, however small it may be, we do the same and we have the reassurance of Jesus today who says: *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust in me."* Know then that Jesus is with you in all the service you give. It may also help to reflect on the ritual prayer for the commissioning of deacons, *"Receive the Gospel of Christ whose herald you are; believe what you read, preach what you believe, put into practice what you preach."* If, however, you are worried about the preaching, listen to this story:

TO KNOW CHRIST

A dialogue between a recent convert and an unbelieving friend:

"So, you *have been converted to Christ?*" "Yes."

"Then you must know a great deal about him. Tell me: what country was he born in?" "I don't know."

"What was his age when he died?" "I don't know."

"How many sermons did he preach?" "I don't know."

"You certainly know very little for a man who claims to be converted to Christ."

*“You are right. I am ashamed at how little I know about him. But this much I know: Three years ago, I was a drunkard. I was in debt. My family was falling apart. My wife and children would dread my coming home each day. **Now** I have given up drink; we are out of debt; ours is a happy home. All this Christ has done. This much I know of him!”*

To *really* know is to be transformed by what one knows.

Another reflection that shows us, *that’s you and me*, that Jesus trusts us completely:

Once a man, who was browsing in a shop, made the astonishing discovery that God was behind the sales counter. So, the man walked over and asked, “What are You selling?” God replied, “What does your heart desire?” The man said, “I want happiness, peace of mind, and freedom from fear . . . for me and for the whole world.” God smiled and said, “I don’t sell fruit here. Only seeds.”

The disciples were full of questions about God.

So the Master said to them, “God can never really be known in this life. Every statement about Him, every answer to your questions, is only a thin reflection of the Truth.”

The disciples were bewildered. “Then why do you speak about God at all?”

“Why does the bird sing?” said the Master.

The bird sings because he has a song. The words of scholars are to be understood. The words of the Master are to be listened to as one listens to the wind in the trees and the sound of the river and the song of the bird. They will awaken something within the heart that is beyond all knowledge and understanding.

And always remember what St Peter told us: that we are **chosen** by God that we possess **royal dignity** and are **specially blessed**. That we are called to sing the praises of God through our service of others and our prayer so as to be **filled with the light of Christ** and bring that light to all those we encounter: a light of goodness, love, hope and affirmation.

We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song!

What sound does a witch’s car make? Broom! Broom!

- What do you call a man with a rubber toe? Roberto.
- The secret service isn't allowed to yell "Get down!" anymore when the president is about to be attacked. Now they have to yell "Donald Duck!"

- I was watching the London Marathon and saw one runner dressed as a chicken and another runner dressed as an egg. I thought, 'This could be interesting.'