

How Can We Know the Way?
Sunday Advent 1, Year A
Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a, 51-60; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14
May 10, 2020

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

He is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

You have no idea how good that sounds. Or, maybe you do. We went into exile during Lent, and we emerge during Easter. Another, very real, resurrection story, isn't it?

And, listen to what our Savior says to us, as we gather here today, “*Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going (vs. 1-4).*

Jesus describes for us a beautiful elevator. It is an elevator that connects earth and heaven. And, even more beautiful, it connects you and God.

But, how do we find that elevator? What buttons do we push? How do we even get the doors to open?

Often times, when I visit people in a hospital, I have to stop at the front desk and ask where the person is located, and how to get there. Hospitals are often places that are difficult to navigate. And, the bigger they are, the harder they are to find where you need to go. Sometimes, the signs they have help out. Often times, for me at least, they don't. So, asking the person up front is the best way, I've found, to get going to the right place. They know where I need to go, and I don't. They know how to get to the elevator, and which floor I need to get off on. I don't know how many times, even with that kind of help, I still get lost and have to stop and ask someone else for directions. Have you ever gotten lost in a hospital? Have you ever gotten yourself turned around and didn't know how to get to where you were supposed to be?

Well, you are not alone. The disciples had problems, too. Jesus tells them that He is going away. He is going to prepare a room for them. And He tells them that they know the way. You can almost see the disciples turning to one another with a dazed look on the faces. Shrugging the shoulders. Some with eyebrows raised. Finally, Thomas speaks up and says, “*Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?*” (v. 5).

Jesus is giving them directions, yet they still are lost. “Ok, Jesus, so you are going to the Father. I get that...but, what’s His address again? What room number? And how are we supposed to be able to find it?”

Ah, they are looking for the elevator... the one that will get them to the Father. Not that the Father is sick... no, He is the Great Physician. He is the one that is healing and making all things new. He is the one that is removing sorrow and suffering. He is offering the balm of forgiveness and salvation that is applied to our hurting and heavy hearts.

I, too, NEED to know how to get there, Jesus! Tell me how to get to the Father! I am sick. I have done and said some terrible things. My mind is bent on vengeance and not mercy. My mouth, I use to curse others and to plot against them. I say some pretty nasty things, even about Your own people. The things I have done, and the things I am willing to do... Father forgive me.

“*Let not your hearts be troubled.*” Thanks Jesus...I really did need that. (man, He’s good). But, Jesus, we ask you again, “*Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?*”

Here is that beautiful elevator. It isn’t something that we have to seek after or find. It is as if Jesus comes to meet us and, then, carries us to the Father. “*I am the way, and the truth, and*

the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” (vs. 6-7).

Jesus comes to us who are lost and carries us to the Father.

It is very much like the child that falls asleep in the car leaving grandma’s house. They miss the entire trip. They did not have to navigate anything. All they did was rest. Their hearts were not troubled. They slept. All the while, they were being carried to their home, up the stairs, down the hall, shoes removed, tucked in a soft comfy bed, and the tingle of a goodnight kiss on the cheek that sends them deeper into that peaceful rest. When they awake. They are home. They are safe. They are rested.... They leap from the bed. Wow...what a magic elevator ride, to get them all the way there. They didn’t know the way. Nor, could they have navigated it if they did. But, there they are. Home.

And, here you are friends... home. Not your eternal home, of course. But, home, none the less. The Father continues to wait for you. Jesus has prepared the way for you, and will come again. Yet, in the meantime, this is our home. The place where the Holy Spirit does His work of calling, gathering and enlightening God’s children. Bringing to them life, love, and forgiveness. All the things Jesus has won for you, the Holy Spirit brings and delivers them to you. They are delivered right here. So, we come to receive them.

It is a bit of an irony, perhaps, that we have come back to this place, our Mother, the Church, on Mother’s Day. The role and task of a mother is to love and nurture her children. To teach them. To protect them. To make sure they are brought up able to care for themselves and to care for others. This is what the Church does for us.

In this place, we are fed, taught, and nurtured. You have had many pastors in this place. Yet, it isn’t the pastors. You have had many liturgies. Yet, it isn’t the liturgies. You have had

many hymns and songs and sermons. Yet, it wasn't them, either. It was the Holy Spirit working through all of those things, sometimes in spite of those things, that has fed, taught and nurtured you in this place.

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation...” (1 P. 2:2).

Your God loves you. To Him, *“you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 P. 2:9).*

And because you are that special to Him, He hasn't left you to wander around aimlessly looking for the elevator to get to Him. Instead, He sent His Holy Spirit to call you, gather, enlighten you. So, that, when He sends His Son to get you, you will be ready. And the Son, Jesus, is *“the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to Father except through [Him]” (Jn. 14:6).*

And, on that day, when He comes again, you will open your eyes, and you will be home.

Alleluia. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Alleluia.

He is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Amen.