

FIRST READING

They chose seven men filled with the Spirit.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

6:1-7a

A lot of people were becoming followers of the Lord.
But some of the ones who spoke Greek started complaining
about the ones who spoke Aramaic.
They complained that the Greek-speaking widows
were not given their share
when the food supplies were handed out each day.

The twelve apostles called the whole group of followers together
and said,

“We should not give up preaching God’s message
in order to serve at tables.

My friends, choose seven men who are respected and wise
and filled with God’s Spirit.

We will put them in charge of these things.

We can spend our time praying and serving God by preaching.”

This suggestion pleased everyone,
and they began by choosing Stephen.

He had great faith and was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Then they chose Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas,
and also Nicolaus,
who worshiped with the Jewish people in Antioch.

These men were brought to the apostles.

Then the apostles prayed and placed their hands on the men
to show that they had been chosen to do this work.

God’s message spread,
and many more people in Jerusalem became followers.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18

R. (16) You open your hand to feed us, Lord; you answer all our needs.

All creation will thank you,
and your loyal people will praise you.
They will tell about
your marvelous kingdom and your power.

R. You open your hand to feed us, Lord; you answer all our needs.

Everyone depends on you,
and when the time is right,
you provide them with food.
By your own hand you satisfy
the desires of all who live.

R. You open your hand to feed us, Lord; you answer all our needs.

Our Lord, everything you do
is kind and thoughtful,
and you are near to everyone
whose prayers are sincere.

R. You open your hand to feed us, Lord; you answer all our needs.

ALLELUIA

John 14:6

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord;
no one comes to the Father, except through me.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to John

14:1-12

Jesus said to his disciples,

“Don’t be worried!
Have faith in God and have faith in me.
There are many rooms in my Father’s house.
I wouldn’t tell you this, unless it was true.
I am going there to prepare a place for each of you.
After I have done this,
 I will come back and take you with me.
Then we will be together.
You know the way to where I am going.”

Thomas said, “Lord, we don’t even know where you are going!
How can we know the way?”

“I am the way, the truth, and the life!” Jesus answered.
“Without me, no one can go to the Father.
If you had known me,
 you would have known the Father.
But from now on, you do know him,
 and you have seen him.”

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father.
That is all we need.”

Jesus replied:
“Philip, I have been with you for a long time.
Don’t you know who I am?
If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.

How can you ask me to show you the Father?
Don’t you believe that I am one with the Father
 and that the Father is one with me?
What I say is not said on my own.
The Father who lives in me does these things.

“Have faith in me when I say that the Father is one with me
 and that I am one with the Father.
Or else have faith in me simply because of the things I do.

“I tell you for certain that if you have faith in me,
 you will do the same things that I am doing.
You will do even greater things,
 now that I am going back to the Father.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Prayer:

Dear Lord,
Help us to have faith in you so that we can do great things for you.
In your name we pray.
Amen

Readings:

Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7a
John 14:1-12

Reflection:

How do we know our parents love us? Is it because they buy us things and take us places? Is it because they always say nice things to us and let us do whatever we want? Of course not because that would mean if our parents couldn't afford to buy us a lot of things that they didn't love us or if they punish us when we do something wrong that they don't love us. We know that this is untrue. We know our parents love us because they take care of us and teach us how to be good people even though sometimes that means that they must punish us when we have misbehaved. We have faith that our parents will always love us no matter what. They don't have to keep proving it to us. We just know.

In today's gospel, Jesus is almost begging us and the apostles to have faith in God. You can almost feel his frustration when the apostles keep asking Him to show them the Father and show them the Kingdom. Jesus keeps saying, "But I have shown you! All you have to do is see me and what I have done and you have then seen the Father." He is frustrated not only because He has just spent years showing them what God and the Kingdom were all about and they still don't seem to get it, but also because He knows if they can have a little bit of faith, they will be able to do great things.

In today's first reading, the apostles appoint some new people to help lead the church because they didn't want to have to worry about taking care of everything. They wanted to be free to be able to do God's work. This is what Jesus is talking about when he says that if we have faith we will be able to do great things. If we know that God loves us and takes care of us then we are free from worry and free from trying to take care of things by ourselves. We are free to concentrate on how we can make the world a better place and to show everyone God's love. Those are great things especially when lots of people live like that. The world could be changed!

Activity: Trust Fall

Divide the class into groups of 6. Have 5 children stand behind 1 child. 1 should be at the head and 2 on each side. Instruct the child in the middle to close their eyes (or use a blind fold) and fall backwards, trusting that the other members of their group will catch them. Make sure the area is clear so that they can't get hurt. The person standing directly behind the child in the center should catch them by the shoulders not the head. Have each member of the group take a turn falling.

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Discussion:

How did you feel when you were standing there getting ready to fall?

Was it hard to trust that the other members of your group were going to catch you?

How did it feel when you were falling?

How did it feel when they caught you?

If we can have faith in our group that they will not let us get hurt and faith in our parent's love, can't we also have faith in God's love and care for us? God who created the world and who died for us. Those are much bigger things than our group or our parent's have done for us.

How will faith help you do great things?