

14-2-2023

## 5th Sunday of Easter - 7 May 2023

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### Recommended Citation

Black, Peter. "5th Sunday of Easter - 7 May 2023." *Pastoral Liturgy* 53, no. 2 (2022): 1-5. <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/pastoral-liturgy/vol53/iss2/21>

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# 7 May 2023

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

Reflection by Fr. Peter Black

### Introduction

We are reminded today that we are a people set apart to sing the praises of God. As such, we are the living stones of the Temple of God – not a lifeless church built of wood and glass and steel, but a living sign of God's presence in the world.

### Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the revelation of the Father. Lord have mercy.

You draw us into the mystery of baptism. Christ have mercy.

You teach us how to be disciples. Lord have mercy.

### Collect

*The Oration*

Almighty ever-living God,  
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,  
that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism  
may, under your protective care, bear much fruit  
and come to the joys of life eternal.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

This prayer is new to Sunday V in Easter, previously appearing in the revised missal as the collect for the Saturday of Easter Week IV: it has been promoted by a day. The text is from the liturgical books of Milan, though it was newly formed for the post Vatican II revisions by combining two ancient Milanese orations. The prayer begins immediately with the petition that God transform us constantly through the paschal mystery. In this sense it implores God that we bear the resurrection in our lives here and now, and have its power shine forth in our actions. The grounds for this are baptism, in which we were made anew. The reference is as salutary for the long baptized as it is for those newly baptized at the Easter vigil. Three further points are found in the prayer. Firstly, the unceasing care of the divine one is a requirement: all

our efforts are only possible in grace, while the guarantee of God's fidelity is in the paschal mystery. Secondly, as Easter people we are called to bear fruit. Our lives in the paschal mystery work to bring forth the reign of God. Finally, a fruitful life lived in the paschal mystery is consonant with knowing the joys of heaven and celebrating them in eternity.

### **Acknowledgement**

The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by Gerard Moore for the Canadian liturgical journal *Celebrate!* (Novalis Press). Our thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

## **First Reading**

### **Acts 6:1-7**

In today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we learn that the early Church – when faced with challenges – found new ways of living the Gospel. When we are faced with challenges, can we find new ways of being faithful? Or do we give up because it is just too hard?

## **Responsorial Psalm**

### **Psalm 32(33): 12-3, 4-5, 18-19**

*Lord let your mercy be on us as we place our trust in you. Or alleluia.*

For those who trust in the Lord there is justice and right because the Lord is faithful.

## **Second Reading**

### **1 Peter 2:4-9**

In one of the most beautiful passages in 1 Peter, we are reminded that we are called to be living stones, making a spiritual house, because the Lord himself is the living stone; the Lord who has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

## **Gospel Reading**

### **John 14:1-12**

In this familiar reading, Jesus assures those who follow him not to be afraid. For even if we think that we do not know the way, Jesus comforts us that he indeed is our way to the Father, the truth who sets us free and our life in this world and the next.

## **Reflection**

If only our Christian faith could spare us from all the hardships, tensions, uncertainties and confusions of everyday life. If it did you would not be able to get a seat in Church each Sunday.

For an early snapshot of Christian believers and some of the tensions in their community, we only need to glimpse into the upper room on that last supper night. Having witnessed endless clashes with the Jewish authorities the disciples are gathered together to be told by Jesus that there is a traitor amongst them and that this traitor will hand him over to those who will eventually kill him.

Some years later in Jerusalem we have the early Christian community fighting among themselves. The Hellenists, the Greek speaking Jews who had become Christians, were squabbling with the Hebrew speaking Jews who had converted to Christianity. On the surface the issue seems to be about something rather basic, pious Greek speaking widows were missing out on provisions. But you do wonder if the cause of this oversight was founded on a clash of cultures and long-standing suspicions. Perhaps one group saw themselves as more important or more deserving than the other. A practical solution had to be found.

So many troubles even from the very beginnings of the Christian faith. Those words of Jesus must have given comfort to the disciples in the upper room. How many generations of believers have returned to those soothing words in time of strife and sorrow. 'Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God still and trust in me.' No wonder it is an often chosen text for a funeral mass. The words calm the unsettled heart. Of course, we need to see the challenging events of life that cause pain and confusion through the eyes of faith but if we struggle to do so we should not get discouraged. It is a hard call. St. Thomas, the doubting apostle, should give us consolation. He is the realist, the sceptic, the one who is always direct and looking at life from a concrete perspective. You cannot help but warm to him. Remember when Jesus decided to return to Judea to visit Lazarus who was gravely ill. Thomas remarks: 'what are you going back there for, they nearly stoned you last time.'

In today's gospel when Jesus says 'you know the way' the ever-practical Thomas seems to be wanting a map or at least some verbal travel instructions. Jesus must explain to Thomas: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.' It is the same Thomas after the resurrection of Christ who states that he will not believe that the Lord is risen until he can place his fingers into the wounds of Christ's hands and his hand into the side of Christ that was pierced by the lance. Despite his doubts and misunderstandings, Thomas leaves us a simple prayer we can often repeat with confidence; 'My Lord and my God.'

So it should be no surprise that just like the disciples and the members of the early Christian community we will not be spared disappointments, disagreements, some confusion and difficult times. It is part of the whole calling to follow Christ, to take up the cross in the following. We are reassured in the second reading of the day that if we trust in the keystone, Christ, we will not be disappointed. As the psalmist says: 'For the word of the Lord is faithful and all his ways are to be trusted'.

# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

The psalmist reminds us that God is merciful and just, so let us bring all our needs in prayer.

## Petitions

We pray for the whole Church that she may be a sign of the Way, the Truth and the Life, in Jesus' name.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the Church in Australia that the joy of Easter and the power of the resurrection will work within those assisting the implementation of the Plenary Council and the journey to the Synod.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the world, for those in positions of power, that they may have the courage and strength to make decisions for the good of all those who are weak and oppressed.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those fleeing war and political persecution, that they may find refuge and safety from all danger in countries that open their borders with compassion.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who are suffering, especially those who are suffering from depression and anxiety, may they find consolation and acceptance in their families and friends.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all of us gathered around this altar, give us the grace to love one another, as you have loved us.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all the members of our Parish, that in this Easter season we may be an authentic sign of Christ's death and resurrection through our love for each other and the way in which we live in this world.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

## Conclusion

Father in your mercy listen to these petitions, grant them according to you will, through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ Our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year A (7 May 2023)

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
A trusting psalm					293	455
Christ, be our light		3			540	404
Christ is made the sure foundation				640		482
Christ is the world's light				643	467	
Christians, lift up your hearts					355	
Christ our God has come to save his people				645		
Church of God				652	471	480
Come, my way, my truth, my life				656		
Jesus Christ, you are my life					523	
Out of darkness	134					504
Praise to you, O Christ, our saviour	28				587	407
Priestly people				796	589	
Sing a new song to the Lord		76			600	
Sing to the Lord	46					
Take and eat					608	198
This is the day			159			
This joyful Eastertide				845		
You are the way					649	

Title	S&S1	S&S2
Jesus Christ, you are my life		349
That where I am		353
We will follow		358
You are the way	213	

## Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 32: *Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you./Alleluia!*

	CWB	JOBA	LPA
Psalm 32	211	pg. 46	pg. 56

## Music selections by Michael Mangan

**Easter alleluia** (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

**Sing new songs of joy** (FWS) *Based on Ps 97/98* [Gathering]

**You are the way** (TWB) [Gifts, Communion]

**One body in Christ** (Esp V5) (TWB) [Communion]

**I am the way** (SHOF) [Recessional - CHILDREN]