

Fifth Sunday Easter A

'Trust in God and trust in me' says the Lord. How easy it is to say and yet how hard it is to practise. In order to instil that sense of trust, Our Lord then reminds us of something that is very personal, and dare I say intimate, when he says: 'I have prepared a place for you and one day I will return and take you to that place'. Just think, we have our place reserved for us! Which means that we are booked in, our reservations made, and we won't be left outside. What a consolation! Because of these heartfelt terms of reference, many people, choose this text at funerals. The notion that God has a special place awaiting us in heaven and that He personally will come to take us there, is most comforting. Is that not what happens when the priest ministers the Last Rites and gives Viaticum?

Note also that the context hangs on the expectation of trust and trust in Him alone. Therefore, we ought not to trust in our Governments nor our civic or church leaders nor family members, but in God alone. 'In God we trust!' - is that not the motto of America? Only God is utterly faithful and fulfils all his promises. The rest of us humans, pope included, are sinners, and thus, we are flawed and fraught with failure and infidelity. Sadly, today most people trust more in their money, security and health insurance, than they do in God. I can say that because a prerequisite of trust is prayer. And too few people today pray. Incidentally, prayer is not telling God what you think – but rather reporting for duty and listening to Him.

Furthermore, a prerequisite of prayer is hope and a prerequisite of hope is faith. This leads us to the three theological virtues: faith, hope, charity. At baptism they were infused into our souls, and without them, we cannot enter eternal life. Why? Each of these virtues has God as its object and it is by means of them that God leads us to heaven. After all, one cannot arrive at their destination by just wanting to be there. A wishful thought is just that, a thought, it does not do anything. And going from here to there, earth to heaven, involves doing something, making a spiritual effort.

To go there we need to know the way? Do you know the way? Saint Thomas asked the Lord that same question. Perhaps many today, deep down, are asking that question, for they do not know the way. They are lost in this cosmos. Now on a normal journey if you don't know the way you find a map and compass, or GPS – knowledge of the location. Last, but not least, the means by which travel is made possible. Be it a camel or bike, car, plane, if not the old legs, with some provisions. For we are on a journey, being pilgrims, from our baptismal day heaven is our destination, hope is the compass and charity is the means by which we shall arrive.

Back to Thomas now, in response to his question about how to arrive, Jesus simply responds with the statement: 'Follow me, for I am the Way the Truth and the Life.' In providing us with these titles we are reminded of our virtues: for Truth is Faith, Way is Hope and Life is Charity. Faith is believing in truths or knowledge about God. Hope follows because you can only trust or hope in Someone that you know who will lead you along the way. Love is the means by which you arrive, which is yoked to grace in your soul that drives you to love God and neighbour.

When we think about our faith and what we believe we cannot but think about our family. Most people's faith begins in some family context. If not their natural family then Mother Church. In both cases there is a mother whom we thank for being who she is – for without her we would not be. But apart from thanking her, as a sign of gratitude, we should also pray for our parents. The second reading is all about the royal priesthood of the baptised whose primary task as God's consecrated people is prayer or intercession for others.

Lastly, our heavenly Mother, Our Lady, deserves special attention in this month of May, whom we honour when we pray the Rosary. It is a simple, yet powerful prayer of the Church that we all need in these times. After the Mass, it is the most recommended prayer by the popes and saints of the Church. So let us make every effort to pray it well, each day, in this month of May.