

# The Fifth Sunday of Easter/Year A

Mothers' Day Weekend - 13/14 May 2017 - Baptism of Isabelle Monica Butcher (5:00 PM Mass); Youth Speakers (Re: Steubenville Trip) at all weekend Masses; Right to Life Mothers' Day Flower Sale after all Masses; Mothers' Day Brunch after Sunday Masses -

Our Lady of Victory Parish Community -

## HOMILY

### 1st Reading:

Acts 6:1-7

- "It is not right for us to neglect the Word of God to serve at table." – *The community of believers comes to understand that belief in Jesus Christ comes about through proclamation and worship and is made manifest in work that flows from this and back to this.*
- "The word of God continued to spread, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith."

### Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 33 - Sung

### 2nd Reading:

1 Peter 2:4-9

- "Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."
- "You are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises" of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

### GOSPEL:

JOHN 14:1-12

- "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way."

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Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. . . .

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.""

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I. I feel relatively confident that nearly everyone gathered here this day has . . . at one time or another . . . suffered the pain of loss . . . perhaps . . . even "losses" . . . from the youngest to the oldest . . .

You go from home to Pre-school . . . then, to kindergarten . . . but perhaps not all of your friends are at the same new school . . . you graduate from High School and head-off to either a new career . . . the military . . . college . . . and once again . . . those you had become comfortable with . . . those you had depended upon . . . your support system . . . is suddenly missing . . . you change jobs . . . uproot family and home and move to new locations . . . suffer a debilitating disease . . . experience the death of a close friend or family member . . . The losses we humans face can, at times, seem great in number and far more than we can hope to deal with.

As I looked back on my own life, I recall many losses . . . certainly some greater than others . . . but, as some may recall that I shared years ago . . . one, that at times, continues to be painful . . . but also one that reminds me of so much I have received and blessed with, was the day I removed the last things from my family's home in Maple

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Heights . . . spending that day everything was cleaned and finishing off by doing one, very lengthy and final walk-through to make certain nothing that was not intended to be left behind for the new owner would be left behind.

Walking from room to room . . . I would just stand in the rooms with eyes opened . . . in part . . . and closed . . . in part . . . I could see brothers . . . mother . . . father . . . in those rooms . . . I could hear conversations of long past . . . laughter and tears . . . even some arguing . . . and I would smile . . . and I would shed tears . . . for this was much more than a house . . . much more than a home . . . it had been a place where people . . . people, connected by more than flesh and blood and ancestry, had shared life and death . . . where great lessons were learned . . .

Making my way, ever so slowly, from upstairs to the first floor to the front porch . . . back to the basement and then one more time in the living room . . . I prayed over an envelope I had been carrying around with me . . . and placed it on the mantel in the Living Room. It contained valuable information . . . perhaps more than information . . . it contained something of the lives that had come together in that home . . . for I wanted the unmet . . .

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unseen new owner to know about the life that had been shared in the home they would now occupy.

Leaving through the side door, I hesitated on closing it, since once I did, it would be locked and the key I held tightly in my hand would be placed in the garage, not to be retrieved by me once the garage door closed. But, I also remember, it was not about what I was leaving . . . but rather, about what I was taking with me . . . the "sacred" memory of lives that shaped me . . . formed me . . . the "sacred" memories of lives that would always continue to live through me for they had become a part of me . . . I now carried them in me.

**II.** Yes, I feel relatively confident that many of us have experienced a whole host of "losses" in our lives . . . moments when those closest to us are no longer there . . . and even the places where we spent so much time with them either no longer are accessible to us or have changed so much that they are only to be found in our memories.

Which is why I find Jesus words of assurance . . . of comfort . . . of compassion . . . to the disciples . . . to be so hopeful . . . so promising . . .

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“Do not let your hearts be troubled. . . . I am going to prepare a place for you? . . . And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. . . . Where I am going you know the way.”. . . **I am** the way and the truth and the life. Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. . . . whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.””

This was Jesus farewell to those closest to him . . . he knew their sadness . . . he knew their doubt . . . he knew well the challenges that would lie ahead of them . . . but he also knew that he had **equipped** them for all of this and now, with a few short, but profound words, called them to remember **all** that he had done . . . **all** that he had showed them . . . and continue that work in his name . . . a work that would produce even greater fruit than he had produced in his short time with them. A work they would **never** be alone in . . . guided by the Spirit who would be sent to be with them and others who would follow . . . and Jesus himself would remain present . . . in a new and abiding way.

**III.** The words Jesus spoke that day to his disciples he

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speaks to us . . . to you and to me . . . yes, in times when we have experienced great loss . . . painful loss . . . he reminds us to call on the life-changing memory of the lives that have shaped us . . . formed us . . . made us different . . . and at **all** times, Jesus calls us to do the same with his very life . . .

Which is **why** He with more than a humble letter in an envelope left on a mantel . . . He provides us with His Word that lives in our hearing . . . His Body and Blood that lives in our Communion . . . His very presence in our midst . . . in our words and in our deeds spoken and acted upon in His name . . .

Ultimately, this was the very gift He gave to those closest to him . . . and it is this same gift, handed on to us through the centuries . . . that He presents to us . . . This is what he asked the disciples to take with them . . . and it is what he asks you and me to take with us . . . for it is and will be forever . . . His way . . . His truth . . . His life . . . that lives on in and through us . . . in and through those who came before us and those who will follow . . . helping us, and all who believe, to do even greater works than He.