

## Reading for the Fifth Sunday of Eastertide

May 3rd 2026

### First reading

Acts 6:1-7

**‘They chose seven men full of the Holy Spirit.’**

In those days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the Twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, ‘It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers and sisters, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the Apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

### Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 33(32):1-2. 4-5. 18-19. R22**

*May your merciful love be upon us,  
as we hope in you, O Lord.*

*or: Alleluia.*

Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just;  
for praise is fitting from the upright.

Give thanks to the Lord upon the harp;  
with a ten-stringed lute sing him songs.

The word of the Lord is upright,  
and all his works to be trusted.

The Lord loves justice and right,  
and his merciful love fills the earth.

Yes, the Lord’s eyes are on those who fear him,  
who hope in his merciful love,  
to rescue their soul from death,  
to keep them alive in famine.

### Second reading

1 Peter 2:4-9

**‘But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.’**

Beloved: Come to the Lord, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious. You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in Sion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.’ So the honour is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’, and ‘A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.’ They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But 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 marvellous light.

## **Gospel Acclamation**

**John 14:6**

Alleluia, alleluia.

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

No one comes to the Father except through me.

Alleluia.

## **Gospel**

**John 14:1-12**

**‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In 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? And 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. And you know the way to where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

‘Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.’

## **Short reflection on the reading for today**

Acts 6 shows how differences and disputes were resolved in the church’s early days. The Hellenist (converts whose language was Greek), complained that their widows were not getting a fair share of the church’s social services. The apostles’ solution to the problem shows how changes of practice are not only possible but necessary for the health of the church.

The solution shows two important dimensions of church life: prayer and service; and that living our Christian vocation requires a balance between the two. Each of us is personally called to prayer, to a dialogue of worship with God; and we are also called to service. No matter what we do in life, our work affects others in some way. We should be of service to our neighbours; and provided we have an attitude of respect, no task we do is a menial task. Prayer and preaching the word was of primary importance to the apostles; but service to the widows and the needy in the community was also vital, so they appointed seven trusted men to attend to it, and initiated them by an evocative ceremony.

As a result, the disciples in Jerusalem increased in numbers.. We may wonder how this kind of growth in the church could be revived in our day. Is the word of the Lord still spreading or the number of disciples increasing? In St Peter’s letter, the church is imagined as a spiritual temple, with ourselves as living stones making up a living house of God. Every time we say the Lord’s Prayer we say ‘thy kingdom come.’ This implies taking some responsibility for spreading the word and doing something to build up the church? We can work for God’s kingdom by our daily conduct and attitudes.

The cornerstone of the church is Christ himself, and he offers us encouragement even today. If he is going away, it is to prepare a place for us in his Father’s house, which has many rooms. So there is a place for us all in the kingdom. Each person has gifts of nature and grace, each should have a say in church life, as exemplified by the apostles in the first reading.

Many people today regard faith as irrelevant because their notion of God is faulty or distorted. For an authentic picture of what God is like, we should look to Jesus who said “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” He shows what the invisible Father is like: concerned for all, interested in all, respecting everyone, calling sinners back home. This welcoming God is the one that our church worships, and we renew our trust in Him.

