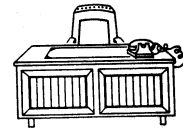


# 5th Sunday of Easter

May 7, 2023



From the Desk of  
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

## Sunday Reflection:

This Sunday's gospel from John (14:1-12) is among the most frequently selected gospels for funeral Masses. It is a beautiful passage that underscores God's comforting presence in our moments of sorrow. It was as though Jesus was comforting his disciples in anticipation of his own death and the grief it would bring. He said to them: "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?" Perhaps, the disciples remembered those words during their moments of grief following Jesus' crucifixion and death.

As we know, life is so full of tragedies. When we turn on the television or the radio, browse the Internet or flip through newspaper pages, we are bombarded with so many tragedies in our cities, nation, and the world. It is likely that you know someone who is dealing with tragedy. It is also likely that we will experience tragedy sometime in life.

Jesus' invitation to not let your hearts be troubled is a reminder that we are people of hope. That hope is rooted in the realization that there is more to life than meets the eye. Jesus' statement is an invitation to transcend the world by overcoming the anxiety caused by life's events or uncertainty about the future. It is an invitation to look beyond our sorrows and painful experiences. But, how could our hearts 'not be troubled' by some of the tragedies of life? Simply by placing our hope and trust in God, and contemplating a future devoid of pain and suffering. This is the essence of faith. Sometimes, we wonder how people who have no faith deal with life's tragedies and anxiety-causing experiences.

Anxiety is a general term for several disorders that cause nervousness, fear, apprehension, and worries. These disorders affect how we feel and behave, and they can manifest real physical symptoms. Mild anxiety is vague and unsettling, while severe anxiety can be extremely debilitating, having a serious impact on daily life. People often experience a general state of worry or fear before confronting something as simple as a visit to the doctor or dentist, or as challenging as a major surgery, loss of employment, death of a family member or friend, etc. These feelings are easily justified and considered normal. Anxiety becomes a big problem when symptoms interfere with one's ability to function. Generally speaking, anxiety is manifested when reaction to a given situation is grossly disproportionate with what could be considered normal.

In the gospel, Jesus provides a spiritual remedy for anxiety, namely, faith in God and in his son, Jesus Christ. Faith is about trusting that God is in charge of life's events and whatever the future holds. That takes the huge burden of uncertainty off our shoulders. Moreover, worrying about problems is not the same as solving them. Faith is about entrusting our life to our creator and the vanguard of our destiny.

When it is all said and done, the ultimate tragedy is eternal separation from God. The good news is summed up in Jesus' response to Thomas: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Equally important is Jesus' response to Philip: "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves." Bottom line: through faith in God we will transcend life's tragedies.

Happy Mother's Day to all our mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers and Godmothers!

*Fr. Romanus*