

Rev. Emmanuel-Garet Ifeakor
Acts 6:1-7
1 Peter 2:4-9
John 14:1-12

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Epiphany Catholic Church
Louisville, KY, USA
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Theme: **Do not let your hearts be troubled.**

So, we are going to begin with questions and concerns. The opening of the gospel really says, “Jesus said to his disciples: ‘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.’” This is what informed our theme today. Thus, do not let your hearts be troubled. At times, we ask questions and have some concerns like: What is the meaning of this life? What is the meaning of suffering? What is the meaning of evil in the world? What is the meaning of mankind who are feeble and sinful, that often do the things they hate and do not do what they want? What is the meaning of death? Even in the midst of technological and scientific advancement, we haven't eliminated death. And we're asking, what is the meaning of death? We also have the concern of what is going to happen to us after death. Or are we going anywhere after death? All these questions, all these concerns, we are going to attempt to address through Jesus' words, assurances, and reassurances today. In fact, the dignity of these questions and concerns is located in the word of Jesus today, saying, “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.” (Singing) "In my Father's house, there are many mansions there, in my Father's house. In my Father's house, there are many mansions there. Oh, in my Father's house above. Happy, happy we shall be. Happy, happy, happy we shall be. Happy, happy, happy we shall be. Oh, in my Father's house above." Do not let your heart be troubled.

My dear brothers and sisters, the heart is the center of activity in our body. The heart is the center of emotions and will in our body. When the heart is troubled, the whole body is troubled. And someone who is troubled is not at rest. Someone who is troubled is in crisis. Someone who is troubled is anxious. Anxiety sets in. This may arise from the uncertainty of life. What can make one's heart troubled? Perhaps because of one's present condition, or because of what a person has done in the past, or because of uncertainty of the future. Today, in the gospel reading, Jesus tells his disciples, “Do not let your heart 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. The context of this assurance and reassurance of Jesus was at the last supper, where he had talked about his imminent departure, betrayal, and denial. Obviously, this is a time of emotional intensity and impending change. So, they had some concerns. They were troubled about what was going to happen to them when Christ would be no more with them. That is, what would be their lot in the absence of Christ? Were they going to follow him where he was going? They were troubled. And Christ had to reassure them that they have a place in the kingdom of heaven. He had to strengthen their faith, telling them, "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?" This is because in His Father's house there are many mansions.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, one of the reasons the disciples were also troubled was what would be their fate in the absence of Christ. We had already an example of such concern in the first reading where the Greek-speaking Jews (Hellenists) complained to the apostles against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. The apostles charged the community of disciples to select seven reputable men filled with spirit and wisdom among themselves who would take care of this task. At this early stage of the Church, there was inequality, lack of charity, and negligence. Therefore, they spoke up. The apostles addressed these concerns. My dear brothers and sisters, as we said at the beginning, at times we ask ourselves, what is the meaning of the effort we are doing in this world? What is the meaning of coming to Mass every Sunday? What is the meaning of coming for daily Mass? Where am I going after this life? Are we going any place after death? Do not let your heart be troubled. (Singing) "In my Father's house, there are many mansions there, in my Father's house. In my Father's house, there are many mansions there."

Jesus is telling you, and Jesus is telling me, "Believe in me (Jesus), have faith in me (Jesus). You have to follow me (Jesus), who is the way, the truth, and the life. Continuing, where I am, Jesus says, there you will be. But there is a caveat in the second reading. The caveat is you have to accept Jesus, who was rejected by some people. It says, the stone that was rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone. And those who put their trust in God will not be put to shame. Let this be a consolation to us. Jesus wants us to refuse anxiety, reaffirm trust in God, and extend the same trust in him. His word brings comfort and direction because trust is always the remedy for anxiety and fear. It is normal to be troubled in the moment of crisis. But Jesus wants to reassure you to have faith in God, and also extend the same faith to him, that after our suffering and efforts in this world, we are going to be where He is. He's going to accommodate all of us where he's going. But we should know that He is the truth, the life, and the way. We follow him to where he is going. This is why I said in the beginning that we are going to attempt to address the anxiety, the concerns, and these questions life presents to us. And at times they used to draw us back. Troubled hearts are normal in crisis, yet Jesus commands calm. Please continue to make the effort. (Singing) "In my Father's house, there are many mansions." Do not let your hearts be troubled.