

**Readings for Today:** Acts 6: 1 – 7; Psalm 33 (32); I Peter 2: 4 – 9; John 14: 1 – 12.

*On these last Sundays of Eastertide the Gospel Readings all come from the chapters of John's Gospel which tell us of our Lord's farewell words to the disciples at the end of the Last Supper. This year we hear from John 14, and next year from John 15. It would be good if you could read the whole of John 14 this week.*

In this week's reading Jesus is preparing the disciples for his departure. The reading follows on from a conversation with Peter. He has asked where Jesus is going, and, when told that he cannot follow him now but will follow later, says that he is ready to lay down his life for Jesus. The response is a solemn warning – which we know will be fulfilled: *Amen, Amen, I say to you before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times.*

This explains the first words of today's reading: *Do not let your hearts be troubled.* But of course they were troubled: Jesus says he is going away – and they, who are his closest friends cannot go with him. So he tries to reassure them: He will come back for them, and, what's more, he will take them to a place where they can stay with him permanently. The word translated 'rooms' come from a favourite idea of the fourth evangelist – abiding – remaining permanently, rather than stopping somewhere and then moving on.

And then Thomas – who've we already met in John's Gospel, loyal to Jesus, but not really understanding what they were doing going up to Jerusalem – Thomas asks: *Lord, we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way?* Thomas speaks for all of us who – trying hard to be loyal to Jesus, but sometimes wondering if it all really makes sense – ask *How can we know the way?* To Thomas and to us Jesus gives the answer *I am the Way* – and more than that – I am also *the Truth and the Life*. I am the only way to come to the Father.

But that's not enough for another of the disciples – Philip – who wants the certainty of seeing the Father to whom Jesus says he is going: *Show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied.*

You can hear the exasperation in the reply Jesus gives: *Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me. To have seen me is to have seen the Father.*

That, put into a very few words, is the message that the evangelist wishes us to learn – that, if we want to know what God the Father is like, we have only to look at Jesus.

And that is the task of a lifetime.