

## 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020 Sunday after Ascension Day

Acts 1:4-14 John 17:1-11

### On Your Marks - Get Set - Go

I have never been particularly adept at running so the phrase On Your Marks, Get Set left me with trepidation on school sports days was I going to miss the gun again and be amongst the runners up. This is not quite as bad as the experience of the French 110 meter hurdler Wilhem Belocian who was disqualified after his false start at the 2016 Rio Olympics in the qualifying round after years of training.

Jesus did not want his disciples to have make false start and, tempting though it is, I must not focus on Pentecost but concentrate today on the Ascension of Jesus which we celebrated last Thursday.

### On Your Marks

Throughout Jesus' ministry and in the forty days from his resurrection to his Ascension Jesus was preparing the Disciples for their ministry. The Gospel reading from John is taken from Jesus' discourse with his disciples immediately before his arrest and crucifixion. In John's Gospel chapters 13 to 16 we have a detailed description of the message Jesus wished to convey to his disciples. We could view this as Jesus setting out the elements of being On Your Marks for his disciples. The key points are:

#### Chapter 13:

**Washing the disciples' dirty feet** – When challenged as to why Jesus did this "he said to the disciples, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.'"

#### Chapter 14:

**Do not let your hearts be troubled** – "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 know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

**Believe in me** – "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

**I will not leave you orphaned** – "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe."

## **Chapter 15:**

**A new commandment** – “that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.”

**You are Chosen** – “You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

## **Chapter 16:**

**These words of Jesus are to keep you from stumbling** – “those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God. But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them.”

**The Advocate will prove the world wrong** - about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned

**When the Spirit of truth comes** - he will guide you into all the truth;

### **On Your Marks - Get Set**

So we come to Chapter 17 and today’s Gospel reading. Up until now when Jesus spoke to the disciples he used the phrase “in my name”, now the focus has changed and Jesus is addressing the Father in heaven and he uses the phrase “in your name”. And Jesus prayer for himself and all humankind is:

**Glorify the Son, Glorify the Father** – “glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you”

**Eternal Life flows from knowing the Father and the Son** – “The Father has given Jesus authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

**We are God’s Gift** – “They were yours Father, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you.”

**We are Jesus’ Glory** – “All mine are yours and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.”

**A call to Unity** – “Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.”

### **On Your Marks – Get Set - GO**

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven” Acts chapter 1 tells us the disciples were still confused. They still did not fully understand Jesus’ ministry, his death and resurrection. They had enjoyed 40 days of intermittent meetings with Jesus and now he had vanished from their sight. You would stare wouldn’t you?

It's a bit like us as we slowly come out of our prolonged Scottish vacation at Loch Doon. What do we want to do first, or are we too nervous or vulnerable and wish to continue with our isolation.

Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for "the promise of the Father" to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit."

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

But they did not go they waited in prayer and fellowship, "they went to the room upstairs where they were staying in Jerusalem, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

So it's not quite Go, no false starts for the disciples but wait. Are you ready for the further loosening of the restrictions on our society, but more importantly are you ready for the Holy Spirit come and dwell within you? Do you understand what this really means for you and the life of our Church community? Come Holy Spirit, just 10 days after the ascension the disciples were off. But that is next week's sermon.

"This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

David