

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Invite those present to pause for a few moments of silent reflection and to offer any special intentions).

Of all people in the world, we Christians have the most reason to be joyful. Ours is the only world religion which proclaims the unimaginable: that God so loves us, so desires to be close to us, so desires to make eternal salvation a reality for us that God is willing to become one of us. The Incarnation of the Divine in the person of Jesus the Christ is the ultimate embodiment of the Creator's love for us. To think that God was willing to be born as one of us, was willing to model fullness of life for us, was willing to suffer, die and rise again for us is so overwhelming that this good news may be more than we can grasp.

The first disciples were not much different than we are. Even with the benefit of being in Jesus' physical presence for a number of years, these first followers needed to be reaffirmed constantly by Jesus of the truth of God's love.

As we listen to the reassuring words of Jesus from this Sunday's gospel, let us pray that our new Pope, Benedict XVI, will be blessed by God and guided by the Holy Spirit in his shepherding of our Church.

Narrator: Jesus said to his disciples:

Jesus: Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. 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, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.

Narrator: Thomas said to him,

Thomas: Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?

Jesus: 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.

Narrator: Philip said to him,

Philip: Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.

Jesus: Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? 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; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 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.

All: Loving God, thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus. May we come to an ever-increasing experience of your love for us. May the joy of our life in You shine on all peoples of the world. Glory be ... Amen.