

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

08 May 2020

Whenever I travel (especially when it is to a place I have never visited before) I like to do my homework. If I am driving I try to get a map of the provinces or states through which I will be travelling. I also try to get a map of the city or cities I am visiting. If I can find a travel book about the area, I will buy it and read up that region. If I can find someone who has been there before I might ask some questions about the area. Despite all these preparations, the one thing which I want most when visiting unknown regions is to go with someone who knows the area.

In today's Gospel, in response to Thomas' question "how can we know the way?" Jesus responds, "I am the way and the truth and the life". This story in John's Gospel happens during the Last Supper when Jesus was preparing the disciples for his upcoming Passion, Death and Resurrection. Although tensions have been increasing between the Jewish leaders and Jesus, the disciples have no idea about what is about to happen. Christ had just washed their feet to show them how their future life was to be one of humility and service. Later, he would promise to send the Holy Spirit upon them, remind them of how they must remain connected to him like branches to a vine and tell them to love one another as he loved them. However, despite this preparation they would scatter when he was arrested and hide from the authorities following his death. They would be lost like travellers in a strange city. Yet, if they remembered his words they could reach their destination. His words were the "way" to respond to whatever life threw at them. The love he showed would overpower the evil and hatred which appeared overwhelming. His words were the "truth" about God's plan for the world. Through Christ's passion and death human sin would be redeemed once and for all. His words were "life" because they overcame the fear of mortality. Christ's resurrection, which followed his death, foreshadowed how eternal life was offered to all people who accepted him. For a while, Thomas and the other disciples would not know the way. But, in time they would find it.

During this Covid-19 pandemic, a lot of people are feeling like travellers in a strange city. They do not know what will happen next. They do not know in what direction they should head. They do not know whether whatever preparations they may have made for an emergency (saving for a rainy day) will see them through this crisis. They look for something which will help them find their way. At times like this, Catholics and other people of faith know they can't figure all this out on their own. God will provide the directions if they ask for, listen to and carry them out. Christians know these directions include following the "way" of Jesus which means not allowing fear and suspicion to distract them from loving others, the "truth" he taught about how all people are brothers and sisters redeemed by him and the "life" he promised which extends to this present world.

Since Christ was fully a man, he walked the entire journey of the human condition. He still walks beside us today. Whenever we are convinced we are lost and do not know the way ahead, we just need to remember where he is; like a map in our back pocket.