



**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**14 May 2017**

**Sentence** 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life,' says the Lord.  
'No one comes to the Father except through me.

*John 14.6*

**Collect**

Generous God, whose way is love, whose truth is searching,  
and whose life is freely given in Jesus Christ our Lord:  
as you have opened for us your house of many rooms,  
so may we make a place for the rejected and unloved,  
and share the work of peace;  
through Jesus Christ, the image of God. **Amen.**

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles**

*The presence of witnesses in this account of the martyrdom of Stephen suggests that his condemnation followed a judicial process. Stephen is portrayed as dying in the same spirit of forgiveness as Luke's account of Jesus' own death, Lk 23.34. Stephen is the first person to die for their faith in Jesus as God's messiah. One person standing by was Saul of Tarsus who held the coats of those hurling stones. Would Saul have come to faith without Stephen's costly testimony? It's an unanswerable question of course, but interesting to ponder.*

Standing before the high priest and the council, Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone

him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

*Acts 7.55-60*

Reader     Hear the word of the Lord  
ALL         **Thanks be to God**

### **Psalm 31.1-5, 17-18 APBA, page 250**

#### **A reading from the first letter of Peter**

*This passage is controversial. The Roman Empire and slavery are accepted as the present order of the world which will soon pass away. However, it has been used to justify acquiescence in social wrongs and even evil. It deals with an important matter – the behaviour of Christians in society – but should not be read as supporting any status quo without question.*

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge. For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honour everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honour the emperor. Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. For it is to your credit if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering

unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, where is the credit in that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

'He committed no sin,  
and no deceit was found in his mouth.'

When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

*1 Peter 2.11-25*

Reader May your word live in us  
**ALL and bear much fruit to your glory.**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**ALL Alleluia! Alleluia!**

I am the way, the truth and the life, says the Lord;  
No one comes to the Father, except through me.

**ALL Alleluia!**

Reader The Lord be with you.

**ALL And also with you.**

Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

**ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

*This is part of the farewell discourse of Jesus with the disciples in the upper room (Jn 13.31-17.26) and is John's interpretation of Jesus' completed work on earth and his glorification in death and resurrection. Here, Jesus assures his followers that there will be a permanent place within the life of God which he alone will make possible.*

Jesus said to his disciples, '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.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' 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.'

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, '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. 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. *John 14.1-14*

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord  
**ALL Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

## **Prayer for the Week**

Saving God, who called your Church to witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:

help us so to proclaim the good news of your love,

that all who hear it may be reconciled to you;

through him who died for us and rose again and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **Bible Readings next week**

## **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 17.22-31 Ps. 66.7-19 1 Peter 3.8-22 John 14.15-21

**Pray for the Faithful Departed.** We remember before God: Albert Wilson, *priest*, Anne Nicholls, Margery Johnson, Peter Olney, William Hardy, *priest*, Betty Glover, Jess Slattery, Lily (Pat) Boughton, Samuel Richard Creswick Wood, Gwladys May Reilly, Janet Alexander, Colin Cruth, and Sheila Burgess, *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

## **Commemorations of the Week May 19**

**Dustan, archbishop of Canterbury (909-988).** A Benedictine monk at Glastonbury, Dunstan became Abbot in 939. His principal achievement was restoration of monastic life after its destruction by Danish invasions. In 960 he was made Archbishop of Canterbury and was instrumental in reforming the Church of England, largely through the monastic orders.

[Prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> century reformation England had many large and small monasteries, the ruins of some of which are still there today. The tragedy was that when England began to colonise the world, it had no 'armies' of Anglican missionaries to send. The monasteries were suppressed by Henry VIII who demanded the loyalty of monks and nuns and executed or turned them out when they refused his authority and remained loyal to the Bishop of Rome (aka 'the Pope'). By the end of his reign, Henry had squandered all the monies thus obtained in warfare.]

