



"IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY DWELLING PLACES."

May 14, 2017 John 14: 1-14 & Acts 6: 1-7

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Stone, Naomi. [Heart to Heart to Heart to Heart](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [A Prayer with a Infallible Guarantee](#)

[Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

ENTERING THE SCENE:

Even though this scene in John's gospel comes within the Last Supper reading, it seems well placed as we begin to live into what the Resurrection reveals. Now we can look back and see how far we have come since Jesus first told us that he is the way. We can see a bit further along the way. With the tearing of the temple veil, what was hidden from view, is now open for all to see. We can fully see how the Father, in the Son, through the Holy Spirit, LOVES.

Jesus is confident that when we see how loved we are, we will do even greater things that he was able to do. We only need to learn how to ask how he asked. That is, not my will but yours be done. It is the prayer we all know as the Lord's Prayer. How does knowing this help us to be free of a troubled heart?

John 14: 1-14

1 Do not let your **hearts** be **troubled**. **Trust in God**; **trust also in me**. 2 In my **Father's house** are many **rooms**; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to **prepare** a place for you. 3 And if I go and **prepare** a place for you, I will **come back** and **take you** to be **with me** that you also may **be where I am**. 4 You **know** the way to the place where **I am going**." 5 **Thomas** said to

him, "Lord, we **don't know** where you are **going**, so how can we **know the way**?" 6 Jesus answered, "**I am the way and the truth and the life**. No one **comes to the Father** except **through me**. 7 If you really **knew me**, you would **know my Father** as well. From now on, you do **know him** and have **seen him**." 8 **Philip** said, "Lord, **show us the Father** and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you **know me, Philip**, even after I have been **among you** such a long time? Anyone who has **seen me** has **seen the Father**. How can you say, '**Show us the Father**'? 10 Don't you **believe that I am in the Father**, and that the **Father is in me**? The **words** I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the **Father**, living **in me**, who is doing his work. 11 **Believe me** when I say that **I am in the Father** and the **Father is in me**; or at least **believe on the evidence** of the **miracles** themselves.

(Verses 12-14 are included in the Revised Common Lectionary)

12 I tell you the **truth**, anyone who has **faith in me** will do what I have been doing. He will do even **greater things** than these, because I am **going to the Father**. 13 And I will do whatever you **ask in my name**, so that the Son may bring **glory to the Father**. 14 You may **ask me** for anything in my **name**, and I will do it.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Jesus prays that our hearts not be troubled, but to trust in God and to trust in him. Are I more able to trust this Easter season than ever before?

PRAYER: Once again Jesus, you stretch me beyond my abilities. Yet the only reason I am drawn to you is that mysterious awareness to the way you have become a part of me, and I a part of you. Now you say that this same union is with the Father as well. The only way I can feel my way into this mystery is to ponder how love makes me one with someone even now. I suspect that I will continue to unfold the depths of this truth all the days of my life. Thank you for loving me into this truth. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

HEARTS: Ancient people spoke of the heart as the center of physical, emotional, and spiritual life.

If I would have been around the table that night would my 'heart' have been "troubled"? Would I be experiencing physical, emotional and spiritual turmoil?

TROUBLED: The word troubled is used for all kinds of situations that cause fear, pain, distress, and complications.

How does their lack of understanding that Jesus has to die in order to conquer death set the stage for all their 'troubles'?

TRUST / BELIEVE / TRUTH / FAITH: We live our days in the trust of many things that we do not fully understand. We see their effects and come to believe that something is true. We then put our faith in this ‘truth’, even though we could not give a rational explanation for that trust.

Now that Jesus has risen from the dead and I have seen what he promised to be true, is it easier to trust and have faith in that truth?

GOD / FATHER: Jesus lives in the reality that the creator of all that is, (God), is also father of all that is. This father loves and wants the wellbeing of all the children of creation.

How does Jesus’ understanding of the Father compare with all the other understandings of God?

IN ME: The intimacy of being “in” someone is how Jesus connects himself, God, and the disciples.

Is there anyone in my life that is “in me”? Am I “in” anyone else? How do I know when this “in-ness” happens? How does this experience help me to understand what Jesus is saying in this text?

HOUSE / ROOMS: In the world of Jesus, entire families lived in a sort of family compound. As the family grew, more additions were built on to the original house.

Do I experience myself as an addition to God’s family? If so, how did I come to this awareness? If not, what is keeping me from this experience?

PREPARE: Jesus has already “moved” from the space and time dimension of this world in his own heart. He is going beyond these limits to get things ready for us when we also do the same.

When I experience a death, do I “know” that a place has already been prepared for the person by Jesus? How does this affect me as I pick up my daily living beyond the death?

COME BACK / TAKE YOU / WITH ME: The early church took these words very literally, and some withdrew from normal living to wait for this event. (See 2 Thes. 3:6f; James 5:8) Jesus teaches what the disciples are to do in the meantime. (See Mk. 13:32 and parallels)

Can I give an example of this form of thinking in the world today? Would Jesus give the same advice to me today?

KNOW / KNEW: To know is to understand something clearly. It is obvious that the disciples still do not know what Jesus is truly all about, so Philip and Thomas speak for all of them when they admit to not knowing.

Do Philip and Thomas speak for me too?

I AM: Reaching back to Exodus 3:14, we find these words identifying God. John’s gospel uses these words often about Jesus.

What does John want me to ‘know’ by using these same words about Jesus?

THE WAY / THE TRUTH / THE LIFE: The disciples struggle to understand what Jesus is trying to tell them.

What will it take for them to finally come to understand Jesus’ teaching? How does their struggle help me to see the way, truth and life of Jesus?

SEEN / SHOW US / EVIDENCE: It appears that no amount of evidence is enough for the disciples to confidently say that they now see.

Why do I think this is so? What needs to happen to clear up their/my confusion?

PHILIP / THOMAS: Thomas and Philip are trying desperately to understand what Jesus is saying to them.

Does my faith journey mirror theirs? Does it help or comfort me to know that they didn’t get it?

AMONG YOU: Jesus has spent his entire ministry with these men and still they “don’t get it”.

What was in the way of their/my understanding?

WORDS / MIRACLES: Little by little, the teachings and miracles of Jesus drew the disciples in closer to the reality of God’s presence in the world. But they could not make the leap of faith needed to “get it” until after Pentecost. Jesus knows this and prays that they will finally “see”.

Do I ever imagine that Jesus is also praying for me to be able to see? If so, would that help me as I grow in my own faith?

GREATER THINGS: Having just been reminded of the wondrous things of Jesus’ ministry, Jesus now foretells that when the disciples really “see” they will do even greater things.

Do I think this would have “blown their minds”? Has Jesus’ prophecy come true? Examples?

ASK IN MY NAME: Jesus tells the disciples to always ask in the same way that he asked. (Mt. 26:39 par)

How did Jesus ask? How do I ask in his name?

GLORY: John's gospel is the gospel of glory. Standing on the heights of hindsight, the people of John's gospel look back on all that has happened and see that all along, God was working in and through Jesus to reveal to humanity a God worthy of worship. *Have I ever stood on the heights of hindsight and seen the glory of something in my life? Does Jesus seem to be already in that glory in this text?*

PARALLEL TEXTS: Jn. 14:3 // Jn. 12:26; 17:24; Jn. 14:7 // Jn. 8:19; 12:45; Jn. 14:9 // Jn. 1:18; 10:30; 12:45; Jn. 14:10 // Jn. 1:1; 12:49; Jn. 14:11 // Jn. 10:38; Jn. 14:13 // Jn. 15:7, 16; Jn. 16:23f;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Acts 6:1-7; [Ps. 33: 1-5, 18-19](#); 1 Pt. 2:4-9; Jn. 14:1-12; Revised Common Lectionary: Acts 7:55-60; [Ps. 31: 1-5, 15-16](#); 1 Pt. 2:2-10; Jn. 14:1-14;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

People will recognize us as speaking with authority only when they sense that, like Jesus, we are under divine authority ourselves, that our message is not our own, that our actual lives stand behind the message, that our words are meant to reveal God and not ourselves, that we love others enough to give up protecting ourselves, that our real concern is God's kingdom and not how we impress others, that we consider the community bigger than ourselves, and that we are willing to sweat blood rather than get bitter or walk away.

[Fr. Ron Rolheiser](#)

To be is to be with in such a way that what I am is what I love and what I love shapes what I do—and what I do is what I become.

I feel most alive, most electric with faith, breath, and courage, when I think of God as a current that runs through all that is.

- Tracy K. Smith

The more you are aware, the more you are able to help something new arise. The first thing to remember as you're confronting any situation that looks like two irreducible binaries is that the resolution, the manifestation of love, is already there in the situation, but you need to find it. Third force is there because the Trinity is real. And if you are alert to it, you will be able to find it.

Cynthia Bourgeault

Notice that the lover, acting out of the formless existential self, does not say (as a descriptive self-world), "I am precisely insofar as I differ from you, insofar as I am not you," but "I am precisely insofar as I give myself to you, live in you, unite with you." We see, then, that love does two things simultaneously: it both differentiates and unites. There is differentiation because what love is is the outgoing energy from one to another. But what does this outgoing act do? It unites with that other. And the more a lover goes out in love to unite with the other, the more the lover is established as a lover. The more I give myself away in love, the more I become myself, because that's what I *am*, a lover. Pg. 118. Bruteau, Beatrice. *The Grand Option*:

Just as the sun shines simultaneously on the tall cedars and on each little flower as though it were alone on the earth, so Our Lord is occupied with each soul as though there were no others like it." St. Therese of Lisieux:

"When we take one step toward God, God takes seven steps toward us." - Hindu proverb

What God most longs to discover in us is our willingness to embrace ourselves as we are at our beginning – empty, little, and poor. Our willingness gives God free space within us to work out the Divine Plan. Our potential for greatness is tremendous. Acceptance of our littleness makes it possible for our greatness to emerge. Our littleness is not a choice. It is simply the way we are. Our greatness, however, is a choice. When we choose to accept the life God has given to us, when we allow God to fill our emptiness, we are choosing greatness. Who can deny our call to Greatness? Who can deny our call to be saints? Look at Us!...called to believe so that we can do even greater things than Jesus did (Jn. 14:12).

Wiederkehr, Macrina, OSB. [A Tree Full of Angels](#). San Francisco, CA. Harper & Row. 1988. Pages 11-12.

In one of the most often cited, but seldom understood, passages from the Gospel of John (14:2), Jesus says: "In my father's house are many mansions," by which he means that in God the father's household (multiple family compound; *oikia* = *beit* 'ab/'*abba*) there are many houses (single family dwellings): The heavenly household is patterned after the earthly one.

Stager, Lawrence. [The Song of Deborah](#). *Biblical Archaeological Review*, Jan. Feb. 1989. Page 59.

As one who has taught the Gospel of John for more than 40 years, I used to struggle with Jesus' words, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6), because it sounds at first as if Jesus were the exclusive way to God. But as I reflected on it in the context of the Gospel of John, I found that this Gospel speaks very little about our way to God and everything about God's way to us and to the whole world. This means that Jesus is "way...truth...life," not because he is the exclusive way to God but because he embodies and articulates God's inclusive way to all of humanity.

Paul L. Hammer

Philip and Thomas' question: [The Wisdom of Jesus Christ](#) vs. 92. Pg. 178.

[Origin: Homilies on Luke](#) Homily 3, Chpt. 4. [Homilies on Genesis](#); Homily 1, Chpt. 4. Pgs. 370 and 378.

Origin: On first Principles. Book 1, vs. 1. Pg. 414.

Other references exist to this passage of John in documents that did not make it into the canon (bible) that can be found in Ehrman, Bart. After the New Testament. NY.Oxford Univ. Press. 1999.

We understand that God does not love us because we are lovable, but that we are lovable precisely because God loves us. God's love is what gives us our worth. Michael Battle

We are now the Body of Jesus in our world, in our time, in our particular locality and historical circumstances. We are the Word of God made flesh. That is the consequence of the holy communion, the reality of the holy community, the communion of the saints. That Word has spread and extended itself; the Vine has been growing branches, always more branches, and has circulated its own life through them. It has a mission: as Word its business is to speak; to make explicit, visible, manifest the Divine Goodness that transcends all speech. That mission is not complete. Jesus said: "As the Father sent me, so I send you...The works I have done you also shall do... and greater works than these will you do, because I go to the Father."

Jesus, being aware of himself as the Child of God in whom God is well pleased, comes to awaken us and convince us that the same is true of us. He wants to take us into his consciousness so that we can think and feel and will and see the world as he does and act in it as he does. And as fast as any of us is so transformed, catches the Jesus-consciousness, and is able to feel-think-see-will-act in that way, we are expected and empowered to pass it on, to communicate it to others: Freely you have received, freely give.

Brute, Beatrice. Radical Optimism. Crossroad, NY. 1993. Pages 132-3.

There is a love like a small lamp, fed by oil, which goes out when the oil is ended; or like a rain-fed stream which goes dry, when rain no longer feeds it. But there is a love like a spring gushing from the earth, never to be exhausted. The first is human; the second is Divine, and has God as its Source." Isaak of Syria

By means of all created things, the divine assails us, penetrates us, and molds us. We imagined it as distant and inaccessible, whereas in fact we live steeped in its burning layers. Teilhard de Chardin.

God is love. So he who wishes to define this tries with bleary eyes to measure the sand in the ocean.

If the face of a loved one clearly and completely changes us, and makes us cheerful, gay and carefree, what will the Face of the Lord do when He makes His Presence felt invisibly in a pure soul?

He who loves the Lord has first loved his brother, because the second is a proof of the first.

St. John Climacus. "The Ladder of Divine Ascent" Step 30. Concerning the Linking Together of the Supreme Trinity Among the Virtues

"In my Father's house there are many rooms." This is not a description of a certain geography in heaven but a revelation of the breadth of God's heart. The bosom of God is not a ghetto. God has a catholic heart – in that catholic means universal, wide, all-encompassing. The opposite of a catholic is a fundamentalist, a person who has a heart with one room. Page 130.

Rolheiser, Ronald. The Holy Longing. NY. Doubleday. 1999.

"For believers it would sometimes be an easy thing to become a martyr for God, but God also needs living witnesses who will daily offer themselves as living sacrifices for the salvation of others (1 Cor. 15: 31). For death is easy, but it is hard to live, for a believer's life is a daily dying. But those who are thus ready to lay down their lives for God's sake shall share His glory and live with Him forever in fullness of joy." - Pt. 5, Sect. 2 - Christian Mystic

One of the marks of spiritual maturity is the quiet confidence that God is in control - without the need to understand why He does what He does. – Anonymous

We have in this gospel the beginnings of a Trinitarian proclamation. The early church will struggle long and hard to come to some sense of clarity about this doctrine.

Once you know that your life is not about you, then you can also trust that your life is your message. This gives you an amazing confidence about your own small life--precisely because it is no longer a small life, it is no longer just yours, and it is not all in your head. Henceforth, you do not try to think yourself into a new way of living, but you first live in a new way, from a new vantage point--and your thinking changes by itself. Richard Rohr

He who searches for Divine Reality with all his heart and soul and finds it, becomes aware that, before he began to seek God, God was seeking him, in order to draw him into the joy of fellowship with Him, into the peace of His Presence; even as a child who has strayed, when he is safely back in his mother's arms, realizes that she had been searching for him, with deep maternal love, before he had begun to think about her.- Sadhu Sundar Sing

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle A 2014. Pgs. 110-114 To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](mailto:Carol.Oberfoell@theark1.com)

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle A 2011. Pgs. 89-92. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](mailto:Carol.Oberfoell@theark1.com)