



May 18, 2025

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Acts 14:21-27 | Rev 21:1-5a | Jn 13:31-33a, 34-35

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Today's Gospel occurs shortly before Jesus gives his Last Supper Discourses in the Gospel of John. Judas has betrayed Jesus, and now the Lord speaks to his inner circle for one of the last times before his arrest. "I will be with you only a little while longer," he says. At these words, I imagine a hush falling over the group. Rattled by Judas' strange actions and alarmed by the Lord announcing his impending departure, the disciples' eyes must have darted about as they held their breath, awaiting Jesus' words. "I give you a new commandment," he says. "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." In a word, Jesus summarizes his teaching: love as God loves. He is using these last moments to exhort his disciples to be as he is. We know it won't be easy – it will involve sacrifice and suffering – but the Holy Spirit is present with us to guide and advocate for us on our journey.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Have you ever experienced a season of suffering and wondered, "Have I done something wrong?" When we meet resistance on the narrow path, it can make us question our choices, ourselves, and sometimes even God. Let today's first reading be a boost of confidence on your journey; remember that your suffering does not imply a misstep. "It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," Paul and Barnabas exhort the disciples (and us). It is natural to grow fatigued, especially when we encounter hardships. This is one reason why the Lord desires that we never journey alone. By God's perfect design, humans require companionship, from other humans and from the Creator himself. In the reading from the Book of Revelation, John the Apostle hears a loud voice saying, "God himself will always be with them as their God." Though the road may be peppered with pain, and the trials overwhelming, may we never forget that our God is very near!

PRAY

Today's readings reveal themes of perseverance in faith, radical love, and the stunning reality that the Lord is *truly present* to us. As we pray with these Scriptures, consider asking yourself: *What areas of my life feel distant from the Lord's presence? How can I open these areas up to receive his light and his love?* Take time to talk to the Lord in prayer about these things. When you do, make sure you leave space and silence for him to speak.