



Celebrate

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2026

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As 1 Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Acts 7:55-60

Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the apostles to serve tables so that the apostles could be free to serve the word (Acts 6:1-6). Stephen does more than distribute food, however. For his preaching of God's word, he becomes the first martyr of the faith.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶"Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" ⁵⁷But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸Then 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. ⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰Then 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.



In - to your hands, O LORD, I com - mend my spir - it.

In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be ¹ put to shame;
deliver me ¹ in your righteousness.

²**Incline your ¹ ear to me;**
make haste to de- ¹ liver me.

³Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag ¹ and my stronghold;
for the sake of your name, lead ¹ me and guide me.

⁴**Take me out of the net that they have secretly ¹ set for me,**
for you are my tow- ¹ er of strength. R

⁵Into your hands I com- ¹ mend my spirit,
for you have redeemed me, O LORD, ¹ God of truth.

¹⁵**My times are ¹ in your hand;**
rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who ¹ persecute me.

¹⁶Let your face shine up- ¹ on your servant;
save me in your ¹ steadfast love. **R**

Christ is the cornerstone of God's saving work and the foundation of our lives. We are God's chosen, holy people who continuously celebrate and declare the mercy of God we experience through Jesus Christ.

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and
precious,
and whoever believes in him will not
be put to shame."

⁷This honor, then, is for you who believe,

but for those who do not believe,
"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the
corner,"

⁸and

"A stone that makes them stumble
and a rock that makes them fall."
They stumble because they disobey the
word, as they were destined to do.

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal
priesthood, a holy nation, God's own
people, in order that you may proclaim
the excellence of him who called you
out of darkness into his marvelous light.

¹⁰Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

Gospel

John 14:1-14

On the night that he is to be arrested, Jesus shares final words with his disciples. As the one through whom God is known, he promises to go before them and act on their behalf.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In 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? ³And 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. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

⁸Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

⁹Jesus 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'? ¹⁰Do 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. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. ¹²Very 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. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Trusting in the power of Christ's resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation.

A brief silence.

God of glory, you have built your church on Christ the cornerstone. Inspire lay leaders, deacons, pastors, and bishops to proclaim forgiveness and your steadfast love to all whom they encounter. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of majesty, you bring forth plants and animals, skies and seas, mountains and valleys. Protect all you have made from the ravages of pollution and climate disaster. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of mercy, you intend governments and social service agencies to be instruments of peace and justice. Guide political leaders and organizations to be agents of compassion, and raise up advocates for those who seek refuge and assistance. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of well-being, you soothe those in distress, console all who grieve, provide for any in need, and comfort those who are sick (*especially*). Instill caregivers with a sense of purpose to be your healing hands in this world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of community, you call us together as your people for mutual support and to witness to your love in the world. Make your presence known among those unable to attend worship today. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of eternal life, you have prepared dwelling places for your people, so that we are never separated from you. We give you thanks for the faithful departed who witnessed to your mighty acts in word and deed. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Monica, mother of Augustine, died 387) Psalm 102:1-17. **Tuesday** Proverbs 3:5-12. **Wednesday** John 8:31-38. **Thursday** Psalm 66:8-20. **Friday** (commemoration of Julian of Norwich, renewer of the church, died around 1416; Victor the Moor, martyr, died 303) Genesis 7:1-24. **Saturday** (commemoration of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church, hymnwriter, died 1760) John 14:27-29. **Sixth Sunday of Easter** Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21.

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