

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday- A 2011  
Deacon Pat Hall

[Acts 6:1-7](#); [1 Peter 2:4-9](#); [John 14:1-12](#)

*Homilies are vehicles for breaking open the Word of God. First read the Sunday readings at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/052211.shtml>*

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

Jesus said this to his disciples at the Last Supper to console them about his immanent departure. Jesus is saying the same to us today. We are to be consoled that he is “preparing a place for us”, where he can “take us to his very self” so that “we may be where he is”.

Where is that place?

Often, when I encounter someone who has just given some great effort with grace and kindness I’ll say to them that I hear the sounds of saws and hammers...of rooms being built on their mansion in heaven as we speak. We all live in prayerful hope that that will be our eternal destination.

But as I try to make better sense of that idea, something doesn’t fit. Really, what about heaven does Jesus have to fix up? I mean, like are they not ready to receive this influx of souls from the planet earth?

What place does Jesus *have* to prepare? Where is it that Jesus wants to take us into himself? Where are those dwelling places where we are to know Jesus?

Those dwelling places are our very hearts. And just as Jesus said to Philip, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me?” Jesus is asking the same question of you and me. Jesus has been with me for over half a century; how do I know Jesus?

Our individual hearts are not the only dwelling places for Jesus; our collective heart is where we know him as well. That is one of the reasons why I love worshipping here in the round. We can see the collective heart all around us. Our first two readings told us that the “number of disciples continued to grow” as “living stones” for our “spiritual house” with “Christ as the cornerstone”.

Whether in our collective community or in our individual hearts we provide the home where Jesus comes to take us. *Our hearts are where Jesus comes to take us.* But, our homes are not places to stay in. They are the places from which we are to go forth. Isn’t that what we say at the end of Mass? And where is that more concretely visible than when we come from the four corners of this space in communion with those we see on the other side of Christ’s table?

Just as Jesus makes the Father known to us, we make Jesus known to the world.

I recently was involved in a holy communal experience. I was the Church's liaison to the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety in their funeral arrangements for Officer Eric Zapata who had been killed in the line of duty. I was also the representative to the family in their pastoral care. The funeral mass was held at Miller Auditorium to accommodate the thousands who wished to honor Eric. You may rest assured that your Church presented the Father as consoling and compassionate, full of hope. The Kalamazoo community responded by reflecting God's intense love and honor for this person and for his partners who place themselves in harms way. The motorcade of over 800 police cruisers found their entire 13-mile path lined with citizens expressing God's love. There was no direction one could look without seeing God. For me, it was when I was talking with his daughter. I asked her what she thought her most enduring memory of her father would be. I told the assembly at Miller that she said it was his smile. As she said so, with tears welling in her eyes, I saw Eric's beaming smile, ear to ear, on her face. I told the assembly that was a holy moment. That image will be an icon for me for the rest of my life. In her tear-stained smile, I saw the face of God.

While I have been sharing a message in a general way, God wants to give you each a personal message. I am going to give you a minute of silence to listen to God, to hear him speak to you. If you don't hear any particular message, that's just fine. Just enjoy being in God's presence for a quiet moment, so hard to come by in our busy times. I will give you some prompting questions. Just settle on one that fits you or make up your own question for reflection. Get comfortable. Breathe.

-Can you remember a time when you saw God through someone else?

-Can you remember a time when someone saw God through you?

-Can you imagine what that might look like this week—how might God be seen because of you?

**X** In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen