

Sunday Message

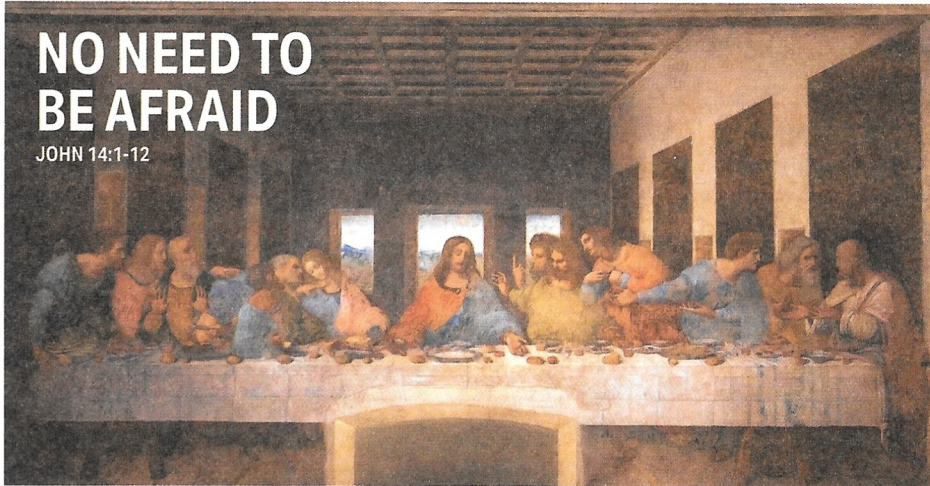
5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year A • 3 May 2026 • Psalter Week 1

NO NEED TO BE AFRAID

JOHN 14:1-12



Today's Gospel is taken from the last great discourse in John's Gospel, known as the Farewell Discourse, and is Jesus' final teaching to his disciples at the Last Supper.

Jesus looks to the future. He comforts those he is leaving behind. They are to trust in God as he did. They will all be reunited in the Father's house. In ancient times, when a group of travellers needed accommodation for the night, they often sent one of their number ahead to reserve a place in the inn. Jesus comforts his disciples by telling them that the accommodation in the Father's house is more luxurious than that of a rough-and-ready inn. It has many rooms, so they shouldn't worry about being refused entry. Jesus will return when the place is prepared to take them with him.

Some of the disciples are puzzled. If they don't know where Jesus is going, Thomas asks, how will they find the way? Jesus replies with one of the great 'I AM' sayings: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no one can come to the Father except through me." Just as he is the gate that offers protection and freedom of movement for his flock to the pastures of eternal life, he is also the way to God. To know Jesus is to know the Father. To follow his way and know his truth is to receive eternal life. ■

REFLECT

There is much talk about truth these days. We hear about fake news and deliberate misinformation and the efforts of online bots and trolls to mislead and confuse people. Some politicians dismiss any uncomfortable facts or stories they don't like as 'fake news'. The advent of Artificial Intelligence technologies will make it even more difficult to distinguish what is genuine from what is not. We won't be sure if a video of a politician making an inflammatory statement or purporting to show someone in a compromising position is real or is 'deep fake'. We will need to be constantly on our guard because it will be increasingly difficult to separate what is true from what is false.

For us Christians, Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Follow his way and we will never be led astray. For us Christians, the highest form of truth is love of God and humankind; for whenever love is realised, God is present.

Pope Francis told a general audience in Rome in 2018 that "truth is not spoken so much with a speech. It is a way of being, a way of living, and you see it in every single word." Theologian Fr Tomas Halik says Jesus wasn't interested in how much of the Jewish law people knew but only in whether they kept the law of love. "If you hold to my teaching," Jesus told his followers, "then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Follow Jesus' teaching by living a life of love, and we will live lives that are true.

This is what Alexei Navalny tried to do. A human rights lawyer and one of Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponents, Alexei grew up an atheist in the old communist Soviet Union but became a Christian. He was inspired especially by the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel, and the beatitude, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right. Alexei hungered for what is right and it became his motivation. In prison he decided to learn off

DO

There is so much fake news on social media nowadays. Think about how you consume news. Are you easily misled or misinformed? How might you better protect yourself and your loved ones from fake news and deliberate distortion?

PRAY

Today's Gospel is popular at funerals. Pray for your deceased loved ones, that they may enjoy eternal life in the Father's house.

SAY

"Lord, help me to follow your way, live your truth, and model my life on yours. Amen."

LEARN

If we want to know what God is like, we need look no further than Jesus.

Jesus shows us the way to salvation.

God has made us a chosen race, a royal priesthood.

For Christians, the highest form of truth is love of God and humankind.

by heart all 111 verses of the Sermon on the Mount and to do so in four languages, Russian, French, English and Latin. He wanted to imprint God's word on his heart.

Alexei endured years of intimidation, imprisonment, and brutality because of his commitment to justice and truth. He died mysteriously in prison in the Arctic circle on 16 February 2024, aged 48, because the Putin regime was afraid of him.

Here was a man who believed in the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and witnessed to it, even at the cost of his freedom and of his life. He knew that the highest form of truth is love of God and neighbour.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Know his truth, follow his lead, live his way, and we will enjoy life in the heavenly kingdom. No fake news or deliberate misinformation will ever block our path. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*O sing a new song to the Lord,
for he has worked wonders;
in the sight of the nations
he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.*

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,
that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism
may, under your protective care, bear much fruit
and come to the joys of life eternal.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 6:1-7

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

In those days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the Twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers and sisters, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the Apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 33(32):1-2. 4-5. 18-19. R. 22

*R: May your merciful love be upon us,
as we hope in you, O LORD.*

Or *Alleluia.*

1. Ring out your joy to the LORD, O you just;
for praise is fitting from the upright.
Give thanks to the LORD upon the harp;
with a ten-stringed lute sing him songs. **R.**
2. The word of the LORD is upright,
and all his works to be trusted.
The LORD loves justice and right,
and his merciful love fills the earth. **R.**
3. Yes, the LORD's eyes are on those who fear him,
who hope in his merciful love,
to rescue their soul from death,
to keep them alive in famine. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 2:4-9

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Peter.

Beloved: Come to the Lord, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious. You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: 'Behold, I am laying in

Sion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' So the honour is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone', and 'A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.' They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL John 14:6

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life, says the Lord.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL John 14:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. 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, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to 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 had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? 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 authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

'Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who by the wonderful exchange effected in this sacrifice have made us partakers of the one supreme Godhead, grant, we pray, that, as we have come to know your truth, we may make it ours by a worthy way of life. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord.
Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in
plenty, alleluia.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

St Anthony of Padua

Presbytery: St Anthony's Presbytery,
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Primary School: 01772 726621
Playgroup/Preschool: 07963 700591

Holy Family

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Tel: 01772 725193
Priest-in-Charge: Fr Andrew Dawson
(Resident at St Anthony's)
Primary School: 01772 727471
Covenant Books: 07396 796969
Sacrament of Reconciliation
(Confession): On Request

Mass Schedule for week commencing Sunday 3 rd May		Intention		Last Weekend:
Sunday 3rd May – Fifth Sunday of Easter				<u>Attendance</u> St Anthony's: 89 + 151 = 240
Today we shall use the fifth preface of Easter with the third Eucharistic Prayer				
Saturday 6pm (Sunday Vigil)	Mass at St Anthony's		The People of our parishes	<u>Collections</u> St Anthony's: £484.01 + £135.00 (Cards)
Sunday 9:30am Sunday 11am	Mass at St Anthony's Mass Holy Family School		Teresa Smith (Anniv) Private Intention	
Monday 9:15am	Mass at St Anthony's	<i>English Martyrs</i>	LISCF	Scan the QR code below to donate to the weekly collection online (St Anthony's)
Tuesday 9:15am	Mass at St Anthony's		Bridget Rogers (Anniv)	
Wednesday	No Mass			
Thursday 9.15am	Mass at St Anthony's		John Wynn (Anniv)	
Friday 9.15am	Mass at St Anthony's		Alan Southworth	
Sunday 10th May – Sixth Sunday of Easter				
Saturday 6pm (Sunday Vigil)	Mass at St Anthony's		Marie Gardner (Anniv)	
Sunday 9:30am	Mass at St Anthony's		The People of our parishes	



Confessions: At St Anthony's 5:30-5:50pm Saturdays.

Baptism and Marriage: If you are a parent and would like to have your child baptised or are hoping to get married either in this parish or elsewhere (minimum six months' notice for weddings is required), please speak to Fr Andrew at the end of Mass.

Tea and Coffee: You are welcome to join us for some light refreshments after each of our Sunday Masses – 6pm (Saturday) and 9:30 at St Anthony's.

Prayer intentions

The Holy Father's Prayer Intention for May: That everyone might have food

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

Cycle of Prayer: Eastertide: New members of the Church, Vocations, Human Work, The Church herself, The right use of the media.

We pray for the sick and the elderly, especially Jo Counsel, Bill Embery, John Mulholland, and David Fogell. For those who have died recently, especially Helen Wood, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Bridget Rogers, Kenneth McKenzie, Dorothy Hedley, Goy McCann-Moon, Geraldine Fazio, Molly Rogers, Frances Fragle, Marie Coombes, George Ross, Christopher Cain, Audrey Cross, Lily Anna Forrest-Cottam, Moira Madden, Robert Garlington, Michael How, Marie Gardner, Carole Worgan, Margaret Yates, Jean Browick.

Father, may these, and all whom we have known who have gone before us, be received into the glory of the resurrection, won for us by your Son, Jesus, the Risen Lord.

The Requiem Mass for the late Helen Wood will be on Tuesday 26th May at 11.15am. May she rest in peace.



Testament – continues Wednesday 6th

May at 7pm: Over the next 7 weeks watch the first few chapters of the Acts of the Apostles come alive as a small group of followers of Jesus starts to spread the Good

News of the resurrection. They face opposition, imprisonment and worse, but their numbers grow as they fulfil Jesus' command to make disciples throughout the whole world.

St Anthony's Gutters: work has begun on the gutters of St Anthony's church, resulting in the closure of the St Anthony's Drive car park access. Please keep clear of the fencing around the scaffolding and try to avoid bringing a vehicle to St Anthony's if possible.

Please note that to allow for clear access to the fire exit under the tower the tables etc. that were stored there have been moved to where the shop was – which has in turn been given more visibility by being moved to the porch. Purchases from the piety stall can be made by placing the money into the green safe in the church.

Advance Notice: Corpus Christi Procession Sunday 7th June, commencing at St Walburges' Shrine Church at 2pm.

CAFOD Sudan appeal: This month marks the third anniversary of the war in Sudan. It is a crisis that may not be in the headlines, but it continues to devastate millions of lives. With your help, CAFOD is still working with the local Catholic Church to provide food, safe water and vital support to families fleeing violence. Any donation you can give (via the card machine) to CAFOD will help fund their on-going work.

Mass Envelopes: A new supply of envelopes, suitable for requesting a Mass, has arrived and are available with the hymnbooks at the back of Church. Please either hand to Fr Andrew, place in the offertory baskets or through the presbytery letterbox.

First Holy Communion: The children of Holy Family Parish will make their First Holy Communion at 11 o'clock on 17th May in St Anthony's Church. All are welcome to come and support them. The children of St Anthony's will make their First Holy Communion on the weekend of 20/21 June. Please continue to keep them and their families in your prayers.

Advance Notice: Masses at St Anthony's for the Feast of the Ascension (14th May) will be on the Wednesday (13th) at 7pm and 11am on Thursday. All Welcome. At Holy Family School Mass is at 9:15 - due to the size of the school hall attendance is for those who live locally or who are unable to get to an alternative Mass.



Social Club News

St Anthony's Club: Have you renewed your membership for 2026? Please don't forget to renew your annual membership by popping in and speaking to the bar staff.

Holy Family Parish Update: Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting to discuss the future of Holy Family Parish, for your contributions and prayer. It is in the nature of these sorts of consultations and situations that there is often a time of processing the latest development and waiting on others. Please don't assume that nothing is happening in the meantime but rather use this as a time to hold each other in prayer. For the time being, there will be a monthly Mass at 11am in Holy Family School on the first Sunday of the month.

Lancaster Martyrs Pilgrimage: 15 men gave their lives for Christ in the 16th and 17th centuries in the city of Lancaster. This Monday 4th May (Bank Holiday) the Bishop will lead our pilgrimage in their honour, meeting at 10.30am outside Lancaster Castle (where the martyrs were imprisoned), walking the route the martyrs took to their place of execution, finishing with 12.15 Mass in the Cathedral and followed by tea, coffee and cake in the library. All welcome.

Talk on the life of Ann Fenwick: Ann is an important figure in the life of Catholic Britain in the 18th century, and in Catholics regaining their civil rights. Wade Loach, who has recently written a thesis on Ann, will be giving a talk in the library of Cathedral House at 1pm on 16th May. All welcome to come and learn more about this remarkable woman.

Gathering for Catholic Doctors 6th June 1pm: An opportunity for Catholic doctors to meet and support each other in their faith, and in the vocation as doctors. There will be a light lunch in the Cathedral library followed by a talk on 'The Art of Dying Well' by Dr Amy Gadoud. Please email cathedral@lrcd.org.uk to confirm attendance.

Thinking of being a priest? A day of recollection and discernment for single men aged 16 years+ who are considering priesthood will be held on Saturday 30 May 12.15 – 2.30pm at St Peter's Cathedral, Balmoral Road, Lancaster LA1 3BT. Gather in the Cathedral for Mass at 12.15, followed by lunch and meeting with Bishop Paul. To book email Heather: Heather.Watts@lrcd.org.uk or Tel: 01524 841190. There is no charge. You will have the opportunity to get to know how discernment works & who can assist you; and to meet others from across the Diocese exploring a vocation to priesthood.

Students for the Priesthood for Diocese of Lancaster: Please pray for the students of the Diocese who are presently in formation: Deacon Stephen Bamber: to be ordained priest: St Peter's Cathedral, 27 June. Chris Sumner: to be ordained deacon: St Paul's Basilica, Rome, 17 June. And for those beginning or continuing formation with the Diocese: Alexander Kanaan, Ben O'Flynn, Dominic Standing, Paddie Denton, & Harry Rawcliffe.

Advance Notice: The Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham will be 28 September to 1 October 2026. On the theme of "Mary, cause of our Joy." The all-inclusive cost is £360.00-£420.00. For more information and booking details contact Deacon Charlie Conner on 07711 345 176 or email charlie.conner@lrcd.org.uk The places will be limited, so please book in good time.