



"The Last Supper," painted circa 1325-30 by Ugolino da Siena (Metropolitan Museum of Art)



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"Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you. Those who know God have everything. Only God is enough." St. Teresa of Ávila wrote that and kept it in her prayer book. Who knows when she wrote it or how often she prayed it.

Surely, she prayed it as an act of faith during the years when she was rejected by her own community, exiled and forced to live in obscurity. Did she share it with her dear friend, St. John of the Cross, when he was tried by the Inquisition and imprisoned for implementing her teachings about reform?

## **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

[May 10, 2020](#)

Acts 6:1-7

Psalms 33

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:1-12

She probably had this prayer when she was accepted back into the community to continue her work of reforming religious life, a reminder that success meant no more than failure — that the only thing that mattered was that she would remain true to her relationship with God.

Teresa's prayer was an adaptation of Jesus' invitation to the disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled." That's a beautiful sentiment, yet we have to admit that a young couple with three little children can't pay the grocery bill with their relationship with God. The elderly widow can't rely on her piety to provide the long-term care she needs.

Today's Gospel comes from Jesus' parting words to the disciples. Interestingly, as we move toward the end of the Easter season, we are invited back to the table of the Last Supper. That happens because John didn't write his Gospel like a novel to be read once and then put down after we saw that it ended happily forever after. The Gospels, and John's in particular, were written to be read again and again. Each time

we read part of the Gospel, we bring new insights that change the way we understand and incorporate the message.

So we go back to "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust in me."

Thomas heard this and pleaded, "We do not know where you are going! Please, show us."

Philip chimed in, saying, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough."

Most of us probably identify more with them than with St. Teresa. I pray, "Dear God, give me even a little bit of proof! Bowl me over, obliterate my hesitation and assure me that you will take care of everything!"

Jesus' answer is simple: "Look at me; look at who I am and your experience with me. Why have you come this far with me? Slow down, listen to your heart and soul. You already know it: I am the way."

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We meet a different face of Jesus in John's Gospel than in the synoptics. Matthew, Mark and Luke offer more in the way of persuasive miracles. John's signs are more symbolic than physical. John doesn't try to inspire hero worship, but intimacy.

John's Jesus asks: "How can you ask to see the Father? Don't you know that the Father is in me and I in the Father? Don't you get it that the love I have for you is God's own love for you? Dredge your memory! ... You have *felt* it. Remember! You *know* it. You are asking for a rock when I am offering you a wind that warms you, a breeze of the Spirit that intrigues and moves you, but never overcomes you or compels you to give in."

The relationships Jesus talks about at the Last Supper are John's substitute for what the other Gospels call the reign of God. John's Jesus doesn't want us to confuse God's reign with any institution or structure. In John, Jesus offers us a way of life made up of an ever-expanding web of relationships that binds us together with and in God.

The way, truth and life that Jesus offers is a way of being together in God's world and at home with ourselves and everything. It's an emotional, psychological, spiritual

space that fits us, a realm in which we belong as precisely who we are. Jesus is offering a relational space where we can safely make the mistakes necessary to every process of growth because we all strive to follow his command, "Love one another as I have loved you."

Jesus says: "Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God and trust in me." That gives us a promise and a mission. "Trust in God and trust in me" reminds us that Jesus' resurrection gives witness to the ultimate victory of love. At the same time, knowing that our actions are the first expression of what we genuinely believe, we hear the astounding promise, that we are called to do what he did and more.

Let nothing disturb us, nothing frighten us. God in us is enough.

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