

Fifth Sunday of Easter

CROSS-AND-RESURRECTION DIRECTION

John 14:1-14

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Analysis by Michael Hoy

1Do 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 me 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.

Diagnosis: Losing Direction

Step 1; Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) – *Tell-Tale Comments*

It's hard to admit that we are lost. In our pride, in any insistence on our own "free will," we may actually think we are getting somewhere. We do not notice how we are spinning our wheels because we are too busy tooting our horn. Thomas and Philip, in their responses ("Lord, we don't know where you are going" v. 5, "Lord, show us the Father," v. 8), say more about themselves than they do about our Lord's instructions. Their comments have the veneer of conveying that they (we) are only a little lost, as if a little clarity will bring it all into perspective. Truth is we are a whole lot lost-more than we are ready to admit.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) – *Troubled and Anxious*

Perhaps that is what the real Searcher of souls, Jesus the Christ, perceives in his opening comments: "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (v. 1). We are anxious because we are incapable of finding our way. We don't have what it takes within us to make it through to the journey's end-at least not through to the end where our Lord is leading. Not through death. Not through to the Father-to a relationship with God that is promising and whole.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) – *Going Nowhere*

Even if we could admit the truth of our anxiety, it would not eliminate the obstacles we face on our journey nor our inability to get where we need to go. If we are not going the right way, if we cannot see the Father, then where are we going? How do we get there? The silence is deafening. The lifeless body remains

in the coffin or on the cross. And there is good theological justification for our heartfelt anxiety. “No one comes to the Father...” (v. 6).

Prognosis: Passing Through

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) – *Christ Taking Us into His Journey (through Cross-and-Resurrection)*

“... except through me” (v. 6). Even though there is no way around our being lost unto death, there is a way through it. Jesus points to the work that he does. That work is his taking us from no-where to some-place. And that comes by his taking us along for his journey-through the cross and resurrection. This is not only the Way to the Father; it is seeing the Father in his work: seeing how the Father is present for us in the very work of Christ.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) – *Believing in Him*

Because of Christ’s journey, we trust that he can get us to where we are meant to go. We don’t trust in our own journey as a journey we can make alone. We trust that our journey is a journey with Christ, in Christ, through Christ—through our own death and into his Easter. The foretaste of that already comes in baptism (which we remember with the directional sign of making the cross).

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) – *Tell-Tale Lives of Faith*

The “greater works than these” (v. 12) of which our Lord speaks is the greater glory of life in his name. We bring the confidence of faith in him to bear upon the life-and-death tasks and challenges in our journey, or that cross our path. In faith, we pass through these, even help others to pass through these, doing the work of Christ by lifting up his cross as the strength for the world, whereby his life, his forgiveness, his mercy

bears us all to the journey's promising end.