

Grace and peace to you from our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

It's a great day!

Six of our students have completed two years of exploration of their faith, their belief and trust in God and their relationship with the church.

In a little bit, we will hear their faith statements.

They will affirm their intention to

continue in the baptismal promises made with and for them at their baptisms, and then we will entrust them to the Holy Spirit to

continue their faith formation,

a formation that is lifelong.

Even as we hear their faith statements today,

we know that their beliefs will change,

just as many of yours have over the years.

Addeline, Brayden, Sam, Emma, Gavin, and Ronnie,

your understanding of Jesus will not be the same in 5,

10 20 or 50 years as it is today.

This may seem unsettling,

but Jesus words from our gospel reading can help.

Jesus says, "I am leaving. I must go away and you cannot go with me now."

It's not surprising that the disciples are confused and afraid at these words.

They don't want Jesus to leave them.

Who would???

To their questions, their confusion and fear, Jesus says,

"Do not let your hearts be troubled."

"I am the way, the truth, and the life."

"If you know me, you will know my Father also."

Jesus says, trust me; trust our relationship,

trust the relationship that God our creator made with you before you were born, at your baptism, makes with you now and will continue with you into the future.

Jesus had to leave for the disciples to get to know him in a new way.

And, so, when you feel the Jesus you know today slipping away from you,

when your thoughts of Jesus' presence and activity,
of God's refuge and strength beginning to shift,
remember Jesus words,
"Do not let your hearts be troubled."
"You know me. You know God."
"We are here". "We've got you."
"Things are changing, but you are not alone".

In these times, I invite you, no, I beg you to pray and wait, to wait and pray,
to talk to your family, your Confirmation mentor,
your pew buddy, your pastor.
Faith formation is a lifelong process and
our ideas and understanding of Jesus *do* change.
And that's ok, and it can be a scary time.
It can feel like the earth is moving, shifting.
It can feel lonely and frightening.

Maybe it feels like a tall order right now, to
"not let your heart be troubled."
To trust that you *do* in fact know the way —
the quiet, unglamorous, risky, but ultimately life-giving way of Jesus.
But you do.
Like Thomas, like Philip, like Peter, like the others, you know Jesus.
You know his life.
You know his love.
You know his death.
You know his resurrection.
You know what it is to seek him,
to listen for him, to hope in him.
You know the way.

The way will not be what we think it is going to be.
The way is demanding.
The way is precarious.
The way takes time.

But the invitation of this Gospel is *still* an invitation to confidence.
Not because we're experts at finding God,
but because God has always and already found each and every one of us.
With every unknowing we embrace,
God finds us one more time.

“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places,”
Jesus tells his confused disciples.
Meaning: God is roomy. God is generous.
God is hospitable.
God can handle your doubts, your fears, and your questions.
And God’s offer of belonging extends far beyond this mortal life.
“I go and prepare a place for you,”
Jesus says as he stands in the shadow of his own cross.
You have a place with me.
You have a place with God.
*You have a place.*¹

We have a place with God always and forever.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

¹ Thomas, Debie. www.journeywithjesus.net