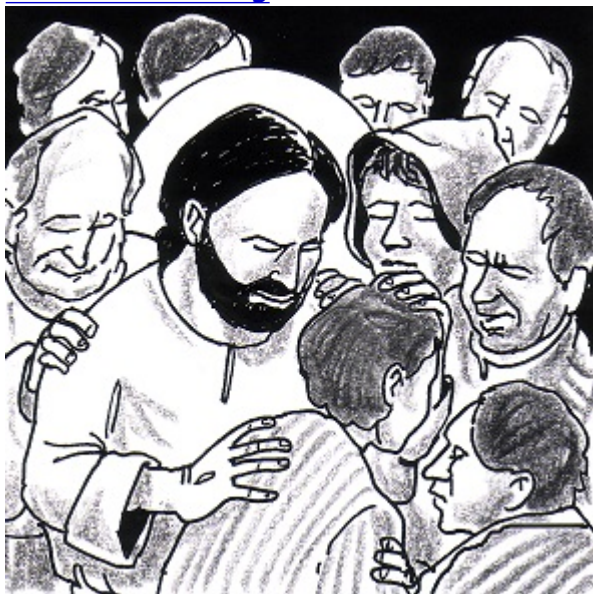


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“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.”

*Acts 13:26-33; John 14:1-6*

The theme of coming home is central in literature and music, a fixed point in the human heart where life’s issues can be resolved in security. Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz discovers after her adventures over the rainbow that “there is no place like home.” Paul Simon sings of the loneliness and rigors of touring and the desire to be “Homeward Bound,” where rest and love await him.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus comforts his disciples on the eve of his departure with the promise that he is going to prepare a place for them in his Father’s house, and that he will return to take them with him. Being with him is their homecoming and their dwelling place. He then says that they know the way because he is the way. Their relationship with him is the way to the Father’s house.

This beautiful and reassuring theme begins early in the fourth Gospel when the first disciples follow Jesus after John the Baptist calls him the Lamb of God. They ask Jesus, “Where are you staying?” and he answers, “Come and see.” Their relationship with him from then on is a journey of learning to see and coming to believe in him.

The shock of Jesus’ death must have plunged the disciples into grief and longing for his return as their crucified and risen Lord in the “Second Coming.” In the Last Supper discourses, the author of the fourth Gospel reminds believers that the return of Jesus is not a future event but a living presence now. Jesus and the Father have already made a dwelling place in them by the power of the Holy Spirit. They are

now temples of God and as members of the Body of Christ the continued Incarnation of Jesus in the world.

The universal feeling of aloneness that human beings experience is the call to find God. Without God we are incomplete, carrying a God-shaped space within us like a spiritual homing instinct that will not rest until we find God.

Jesus entered history as a homeless child in Bethlehem, then as a refugee in Egypt. His sojourn in this world was that of a displaced person, with nowhere to rest his head, a stranger among enemies and a pilgrim who gathered other pilgrims around him who yearned for the homecoming he preached and promised in God's Kingdom.

To know Jesus is to know the Way, for his life, death and resurrection are how we find our human fulfillment and divine destiny. Evangelization is the ministry of hospitality we extend to other displaced persons in this world by inviting them into God's indwelling with us. The Good News we offer others is to say to them, "Welcome home."

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