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"Are we there yet?"

I don't remember a single family trip to the mountains, or any other place more than 20 minutes away, when one of us kids in the back seat didn't moan this mantra. It seems to fit today's Liturgy of the Word.

In today's selection from the Acts of the Apostles, we hear that the nearly perfect community [Luke told us about a couple of weeks ago](#) (Acts 2:42-47), wasn't always ideal.

The contentious Hellenists and the Hebrews represented two distinct cultural strands within the community. The "Hebrews" considered themselves as the "natives" or originals. They spoke Aramaic, revered the Temple and practiced a carefully conservative religiosity. (Give me that old-time religion!) The Hellenists were Greek-speaking Jews, influenced by a wider world. Their families had settled outside the promised land and their culture — language, customs, religiosity — had been affected by that.

Fifth Sunday of Easter

[May 3, 2026](#)

Acts 6:1-7

Psalm 33

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:1-12

So, as happens, some of the Hellenists saw the Hebrews as too rigid, and the strictest Hebrews viewed the Hellenists as "cafeteria Jews."

This ongoing clash predisposed the Greeks to assume that the Hebrews disparaged them and overlooked their neediest people, leading them into that perennial practice of "grumbling." Long ago, hungry Hebrew refugees in the desert grumbled against Moses, and the imagination of the hungry tends to interpret current hardships as unfair and someone else's fault.

The apostles, wiser than they had been when they walked with Jesus, knew better than to offer a solution that would eventually bring on more grumbling. So they told the community — especially the grumblers — to meet and select seven "reputable" men to handle the situation by serving equitably at table while the apostles continued their important practice of preaching the good news to anyone with ears to hear. Grumblers, then, could hardly complain because they themselves had chosen the ones called to serve.

In today's Gospel, we hear God's solution to "unfair/not yet there." First, Jesus promises that the Father offers all anyone can need. There are mansions for everyone — Greeks and Hebrews, natives and immigrants, refugees and even those who cause harm to others. The hitch is that to arrive there, one has to travel along the way of Jesus.

Like Thomas, we disciples ceaselessly wonder, "What is that way?" Jesus' first reply does not feel all that helpful. "I AM the way, the truth and the life." We might imagine Thomas saying, "I ask for a road map and you give me a philosophy lesson!"

Jesus' second explanation is clearer and more challenging: "How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? I am in the Father and the Father is in me. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works."

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That's it, clear and simple and demanding total commitment. Jesus, the one who has walked among them, healed, loved, sweated, gotten tired and hungry and even angry, he is the Incarnation, God's creating, sustaining Word made flesh. He invites disciples to be in him as he is in the Father.

Jesus goes on to say, "Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do and greater." Those works? Jesus raised the dead, turned water into wine, healed the sick and fed thousands. Yet, about none of those things did he ever say, "Do this (in memory of me)." In the Gospel of John, the only time Jesus told his disciples to do what he did was when he washed their feet — which, in John's Gospel, summarized the meaning of the Last Supper and the whole of Jesus' life.

Serving one another in humble love is the way we are to practice our holy priesthood. Peter tells us that we are "living stones" being built into a spiritual home,

a new temple.

Are we there yet? No, and we won't be until the end. "There" happens when all is one in Christ and in the Father, and as long as there is life, we are on the way.

The good news is that we now know the way. Jesus showed us the way to grow in a relationship with God that draws us irresistibly into loving others, serving them, feeling their need and responding with all we are and have. This is the way, the only way. This is what Jesus meant when he broke the bread and invited his disciples to repeat his way of giving everything for others. Sure, we will get tired, see the imperfections and grumble along the way. But even in those moments we are on the way.

When we contemplate this, we realize that being on the way is really another expression of being there.