

**5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER****ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsiegnur****Readings:**<sup>1</sup> Acts 7:55-60 / Psalm 31:1-5, 17-18 / 1 Peter 2:11-25 / John 14:1-14**Theme:** *Christ the Way: Truth revealed in love, life entrusted to the Father***Acts 7:55-60**

<sup>55</sup> But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup> "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" <sup>57</sup> But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. <sup>58</sup> Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup> While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." <sup>60</sup> Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

**Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16***Prayer and Praise for Deliverance from Enemies**To the leader. A Psalm of David.*<sup>1</sup> In you, O Lord, I seek refuge;

do not let me ever be put to shame;

in your righteousness deliver me.

<sup>2</sup> Incline your ear to me;

rescue me speedily.

Be a rock of refuge for me,

a strong fortress to save me.

<sup>3</sup> You are indeed my rock and my fortress;

for your name's sake lead me and guide me;

<sup>4</sup> take me out of the net that is hidden for me,

for you are my refuge.

<sup>5</sup> Into your hand I commit my spirit;

you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

<sup>15</sup> My times are in your hand;

deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

<sup>16</sup> Let your face shine upon your servant;

save me in your steadfast love.

**1 Peter 2:11-25**

<sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. <sup>12</sup> Conduct yourselves honorably among the gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

<sup>13</sup> For the Lord's sake be subject to every human authority, whether to the emperor as supreme <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those

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who do right. <sup>15</sup> For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. <sup>16</sup> As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. <sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor. <sup>18</sup> Slaves, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only those who are good and gentle but also those who are dishonest. <sup>19</sup> For it is a commendable thing if, being aware of God, a person endures pain while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this is a commendable thing before God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." <sup>23</sup> When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

### **John 14:1-14**

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In 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? <sup>3</sup> And 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. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way to the place where I am going." <sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." <sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." <sup>9</sup> Jesus 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'?" <sup>10</sup> Do 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. <sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very 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. <sup>13</sup> I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

### **SERMON**

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."<sup>2</sup> Jesus speaks these words on the night before the cross. The disciples feel the ground shifting: betrayal is near, the future is uncertain, and Jesus is talking about leaving. How often have we shared that feeling?—anxious headlines, fractured public discourse, and an exhausting pressure to secure ourselves through achievement, certainty, or control. Into that world, Jesus does not offer a technique, but rather himself: "I am the way and the truth and the life."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John 14:1

<sup>3</sup> John 14:6

Thomas is not being difficult when he says, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”<sup>4</sup> He is voicing what many of us feel. We want a plan, a map detailing the steps to reach ‘the good life’. But Jesus answers with a person, not a program. The way to the Father is not self-invention but communion—walking with Jesus, learning his mind, and taking his path. Christian faith is therefore not mainly about having the right spiritual directions; it is about staying close to Christ as the living direction of our life.

Jesus is also “the truth”. In a culture where truth is often reduced to preference—my truth, your truth—Jesus names truth as revelation: “If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”<sup>5</sup> Philip asks for a vision—“Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”<sup>6</sup> Jesus answers that the true vision is relationship: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”<sup>7</sup> To see Jesus is to see what God is like—in his welcome, his compassion, his confrontation of hypocrisy, and his forgiveness of sinners.

That matters because modern life offers rival ‘truths’ that promise freedom but quietly enslave: that we are only what we produce; that self-protection is wisdom; that opponents must be shamed and defeated. Jesus’ truth is different: it is cruciform, shaped like the cross. It tells the truth about sin without denying grace; it names injustice without becoming hatred; it exposes lies without destroying the liar. If we know Jesus, our lives cannot be built on spin, pretence, or the curated self. We are called to become truthful people: honest in confession, transparent in relationships, and courageous in public witness—speaking with clarity and with mercy.

Jesus is also ‘the life’—not mere existence, nor the frantic pace we mistake for living, but the life that comes from union with the Father, strong enough to face suffering without despair. Acts shows this life at work in Stephen. Filled with the Holy Spirit, “he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.”<sup>8</sup> As stones fall, he prays, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” and then, astonishingly, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”<sup>9</sup> His dying trust echoes the psalm’s prayer: “Into your hand I commit my spirit.”<sup>10</sup>

The life Jesus gives is a life anchored in the Father’s steadfast love, able to entrust itself even when the world is unjust.

This is why Peter urges believers—“aliens and exiles”—to live with a distinctive freedom and an honourable public life. Peter’s letter is not romantic about suffering; it is realistic about what happens when a Christian conscience will not simply mirror the surrounding culture. “Conduct yourselves honorably among the gentiles... so that... they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God.”<sup>11</sup> And when it speaks of suffering for doing good, it points to Christ: “leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.”<sup>12</sup> When Jesus “was abused, he did not return abuse... but he entrusted himself to the one who

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<sup>4</sup> John 14:5

<sup>5</sup> John 14:7

<sup>6</sup> John 14:8

<sup>7</sup> John 14:9

<sup>8</sup> Acts 7:55

<sup>9</sup> Acts 7:59–60

<sup>10</sup> Ps 31:5

<sup>11</sup> 1 Pet 2:12

<sup>12</sup> 1 Pet 2:21

judges justly.”<sup>13</sup> This is never permission for harm or silence in the face of abuse. Rather, it is a call to refuse the world’s favourite weapons—revenge, contempt, and dehumanisation—and to entrust ourselves to God’s just judgment while pursuing what is good.

So how do we shape our lives by Jesus’ claim to be the way, the truth, and the life?

- First, we stay close to him: through prayer, immersing ourselves in scripture, participating in praise and worship, and remaining humbled until his instincts become ours.
- Second, we practise truthfulness: letting Christ unmask the half-truths that keep us comfortable, and speaking with integrity in a world of exaggeration and outrage.
- Third, we learn cruciform love: forgiving where possible, seeking reconciliation where it is safe, and serving the vulnerable because this is what God looks like in the world.
- Finally, we act with hope. Jesus promises, “the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do”.<sup>14</sup>

The Church is not called to anxiety or retreat, but to a steady, courageous witness that makes room for others in the Father’s house. We can take Jesus at his word: to know Christ is to know the Father, and to live in that knowledge is to become a people whose way of life points others home.

**Other source referenced:** *God’s Word: Daily Reflections 2026*, reflection for Sunday 3 May, ISBN 978-1-923033-13-9.

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<sup>13</sup> 1 Pet 2:23

<sup>14</sup> John 14:12