Connecting With the Sunday Readings
The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Today we will reflect on the Last Supper. First, let’s focus on Doubting Thomas’ question. He is a wonderful example of an inquisitive person. We recall his concerns after Easter when he said he wouldn’t believe in the Resurrection unless he could place his hand in Christ’s wounds. He wanted confirmation, as do many others. Note that Christ is quite willing to respond to his need.

We will reflect on this quality of Jesus for this week. Let’s call it his availability to us, whatever our situation. Recall that Jesus came to us, and not the other way around. He wants to connect with us and be a part of our lives. Perhaps the most quoted passage in the Gospels is that God so loved the world (that means us) that God came in the person of Jesus to redeem us from sin and to show us the deeper, more wonderful, meaning of life. Some call this “God’s initiative.” In another place, the Gospel notes that God loved us first. God is not only what philosophers call “the Prime Mover,” —God is also the One who seeks our companionship. Jesus came for our good. And Jesus continues to do this through the loving presence of God’s Holy Spirit.

A Gospel Word for the Home
John 14:1-12

The Last Supper included two parts: Jesus celebrated the Passover Meal, and he presented us with the meal of the New Covenant, the Eucharist. The Eucharist is an encounter of his presence and love for us. The Lord’s Supper is reported in all of the Gospels with the exception of the Gospel according to John. Instead, John focused on two events that occurred at the event: Jesus washed the disciples’ feet, and Jesus gave an “after dinner speech.” This speech is one of Jesus’ longest recorded discourses.

Thomas, the questioning Apostle, is featured in today’s Gospel reading. After Jesus spoke of the challenges that would arise by following him, Thomas asked for more specific directions. Maybe Thomas was looking for a kind of roadmap, so that he and the others would always know which path to choose.

Jesus said to Thomas (and the others) that he, Jesus, was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Thomas evidently wondered how to recognize Jesus’ path. Was it a specific road on a map of Israel? Maybe it was not so defined, but rather individual paths traveled in the Spirit of Jesus?

Later, Paul would speak of following the path of love. Not so long ago, the Catholic bishops of the United States wrote a wonderful letter to families with that phrase as its title. They described how deep, faithful love was present in ordinary families. Following the way of Jesus includes loving those with whom we share family life. That’s the way of Jesus that Thomas wondered about. It’s not a specific road, but a way to travel on all roads.
Not only are we all different from each other, so too is our family unique. And that's the way God wants it to be, with lots of variety. More than 57 varieties! Oftentimes when we compare our own family with others, we become discouraged. We might feel we don't measure up to other families we know, or the way we imagine them to be.

Instead of comparing, think of your family, and your way of parenting as being good enough. We all try hard to be good parents. Sometimes we feel we do well, and sometimes we don’t think we do very well. We can be our worst enemy. We can be too hard on ourselves. Jesus said the only measure of success is how well we loved. That’s the primary thing that really counts in the eyes of God.

Ask those in your family for one example of how love is present in your family. It can be something seemingly small, but know that in matters of the heart, nothing is too small.

God of Trinity and Unity: Guide us in recognizing the good things about ourselves and help us see you in the love we have for each other. Amen.