LECTIONARY FOR FIFTH WEEK OF EASTERTIDE

Morning Evening

Sunday, EasterIV, May 2

1st Lesson Deut. 4: 1–24 Deut. 4: 25--40

2nd Lesson Luke 16:19—end Luke 7: 1–35

Monday, May 3

1st Lesson Joshua 1 Joshua 2

2nd Lesson Acts 21: 1–16 Acts 21: 17--36

Tuesday, May 4

1st Lesson Joshua 3 Joshua 4:1–-5:1

2nd Lesson Acts 21:37–22:22 Acts 22: 23–23: 12-end

Wednesday, May 5

1st Lesson Joshua 5:13–6:20 Joshua 7

2nd Lesson Acts 23: 12—end Acts 24: 1--23

Thursday, May 6

1st Lesson Joshua 9:3—end Joshua 10: 1--15

2nd Lesson Acts 24:24–25:12 Acts 25:13--end

Friday, May 7

1st Lesson Joshua 21:43–22:8 Joshua 22: 9--end

2nd Lesson Acts 26 Acts 27

Saturday, May 8

1st Lesson Joshua 23 Joshua 24:1--28

2nd Lesson Acts 28: 1–15 Acts 28: 16--end

Sunday, Easter V. May 9 (Rogation Sunday)

1st Lesson Deuteronomy 6 Deut, 8

2nd Lesson Luke 20:27–28:4 John 6: 47--69

EASTER IV

“It is expedient for you that I go away.” We are now in that series of Gospel readingsfrom John 16, a passage thrilling for meditation yet maddening for those who must prepare sermons. Sermons are supposed to be practical, down-to-earth,relevant somehow to our daily lives.

But in this long Farewell Discourse, aconversation between Jesus and the Twelve Apostles in the Upper Room just minutes before their going forth to Gethsemane, the Arrest and the Trial, thewords of Jesus sound distinctly mystical, impractical, other-worldly. We identify with the complaint of the Twelve: “We do not know what he means”

The last words of great men make a fascinating study. The conversation in the

death-room of a loved one can be tense and emotionally fraught. So the final

exchanges between Jesus and His closest followers naturally takes on special

significance. Of all the many things He might have discussed with them, Jesus carefully set as His topic the doctrine of the Trinity, the overwhelming mystery of the inner reality of the Godhead as three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

For us, this doctrine seems dry, abstract, of no particular value to the business of life. For Jesus, the Trinity was an urgent and compelling issue. He did not offer the disciples consolation; He gave them instruction. How is it to our advantage for us that He go away? He was speaking (and we now know more than did the little gathering in the Upper Room) not only of His departure at His death, but moreover of His departure at His Ascension.

On the Cross He prayed, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” This makes death no longer our “last enemy,” but our return to the Father. That is the advantage of His death for us. In His Ascension He made good on His promise, “I go to prepare a place for you.” Jesus has carried our flesh and blood, our very nature into the most exalted presence of God the Father, when He ascended “to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.” His Ascension was a down payment,or a pilot project, pointing out our own final destination.

But for the immediate present, the advantage of His “going away” is that it

triggered the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost. Now God is with us “in all times and in all places” in a manner even more powerful and effective than Jesus' presence with the Apostles themselves. Because of the Spirit was about to come, Jesus could say, “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” LKW