

John 14:1-6

1 Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. **2** 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? **3** 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. **4** And you know the way to the place where I am going.” **5** Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” **6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Striving for hope

Brother Simon of Taizé

A few hours before being arrested, Jesus speaks with his disciples. Soon they will be separated by violence, cruelty, lies, injustice and death. And yet they will meet again on the road that they began together. In an unexpected way, the journey will continue.

Jesus converses with them about his resurrection by using images but his words, instead of giving them hope, seem to increase their incomprehension. Thomas even seems irritated. He challenges Jesus: “We don’t even know where you are going. How can we know the way?” He seems to think that Jesus may be fleeing Jerusalem and returning to the roads of Galilee, or else marching in triumph on the city to become king.

It seems that Thomas sincerely does not understand Jesus, but his question reveals more than irritation. He had left everything to follow Jesus... after so much time spent together, going from place to place, cultivating hope, how can he keep going forward if everything that had given meaning to his life is taken away? The separation that will take place is an inconceivable upheaval for him.

Jesus replies in a way that takes the distress of his disciple into account. He does all he can to speak to him in a way that enters into his outlook. The road that Thomas is looking for involves a presence that will never disappear, that will enable him to go

forward and that will be there wherever people learn to know God. This presence is the Christ, Jesus himself.

Thomas, who is asking himself very concretely whether soon he will no longer be able to be a disciple, seems to be missing what Jesus has to say to them. However, Jesus does not reproach him. On the contrary, he continues the conversation. He remains with him. He understands Thomas, perceives his anguish. He does not ask him to get a grip on himself, to harden his heart, to let go of his feelings, to adopt a more optimistic outlook regarding the future or to be less down-to-earth.

At present, the only instruction that Jesus gives him and the other disciples is not to be troubled (v. 1), to live in the present moment the trust that is possible. In this way his words will be able to enter their hearts and open a way, so that one day they will discover themselves that presence that enables them to go forward in life and to express living forms of truth for others.

Daring to converse with Christ, striving to welcome his words even when they remain mysterious: is that not already a way to put that trust into practice? And if we feel that the relationship is limited by a great deal of incomprehension or even by suffering, for God the little that we welcome is enough to prepare us for the Resurrection—that hope that is beyond all hope and that led the disciples, and so many others after them, along unexpected roads, in the renewed expectation to be welcomed all together in their turn (v. 3).

Questions for a Sharing

- x What helps me to regain trust when I am starting to lose it?*
- x Have I already experienced the impossibility of finding Christ where I thought I would find him? In what other places did I look for him? Did I find him there too?*
- x What words, statements or ideas create problems for me on my journey? Which ones give me strength?*