



*Homily – 5th Sunday of Easter 2011 (A)ⁱ
w. Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation for Adults*

*The Most Rev. José H. Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles*

*Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels
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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, and especially you, my brothers and sisters who today will receive the fullness of initiation into the Catholic Church in the Sacrament of Confirmation:

Throughout this Easter season when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are reminded that our Christian life is nothing else but a personal encounter with Jesus Christ — who has died and is risen indeed!ⁱⁱ

We are reminded that to be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to be a witness to his resurrection.

So today as we hear these beautiful readings, let us especially reflect on what Jesus says in a beautiful dialogue with his apostles — that he is the way, the truth, and the life.

Today's Gospel is an interesting dialogue. Jesus is teaching his apostles about what it means to be his disciples. But couldn't really understand what he was talking about.

So St. Thomas asks: "How can we know the way?"

St. Philip kind of wanted a short cut. So he says: "Don't worry about it too much Jesus, just show us the Father!"

Jesus tells them — and he tells all of us, especially each one of you today who is about to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation — he tell us that if we want to go to heaven, that if we want to see the Father, we must make him, Jesus, our way, our truth, and our life!

We go to God our Father by following in the footsteps of his Son. So we must let Jesus be our way!

I'm getting more and more familiar with the Los Angeles freeways, so I know what it means to go from one place to another. And I can tell you that, contrary to what we see in Los Angeles — that it takes a long time to go from one place to another because our freeways are sometime very busy — if we understand that Jesus is our way, then there will be no traffic. Just a beautiful freeway to heaven.

But that means Jesus' life and teachings should be the guide for our lives. His resurrection should be our goal!

Every day, we are called to try with God's grace to be more like him — to conform our lives a little more to his life.

There are some practical ways through which we can do this.

First, we can meditate on his life — on his words, his actions, his teachings, his person, as we read about them in the Gospel. That's a beautiful and practical suggestion for each one of you today.

To find the time every day to read, for just a few minutes, a passage of the Gospel, and reflect and try to make it personal. What is Jesus telling me today?

But Jesus also tells us today that we must make him our truth.

His teachings show us the way to find true happiness in this life and eternal life in the Father's house in heaven.

So we need to deepen our knowledge of the truths of his Gospel and the teachings of his Church.

Another practical suggestion is to make the effort to know the teachings of the Church, the teachings of Christ. Find the time to read the Catechism of the Catholic Church. And if we don't have too much time, there is the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. And everything is on-line — so you don't even need a book. You just "click" and it all comes, as you all know.

Two practical resolutions.

Finally, Jesus tells us today that we must make him our life.

That means we need to be more aware of his presence in the Eucharist and the other sacraments. Especially the sacrament of Reconciliation, the sacrament of God's mercy and love for each one of us.

We must increase our faith, knowing that we have eternal life through his Body and Blood, which he gives us in the Eucharist.

So, we have three practical things: the reading of the Gospel, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Eucharist.

I have to share with you that one of the most important moments in my life was when I was a teenager — I have said this many times — and for some reason, I decided to go to daily Mass. And it totally changed my life.

And if we do that — if we really understand what it means for us that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, then we will always feel God’s presence in our lives.

Because God is a loving God. God wants each one of us to be the happiest person in the world.

God, as we heard in the first reading of today’s Mass, wants us to be a part of his family, the family of God.

God wants us to be holy and priestly and to become part of the chosen people, his own people, his own family.

And are called to make our lives something beautiful, as St. Peter says in the second reading of today’s Mass, something beautiful that we offer as spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. We are called to proclaim the wonderful deeds of the risen Christ, who has called us out darkness and into his marvelous light!

So, my brothers and sisters, let us renew our resolution to allow Jesus to be the way, the truth and the life in each one of us.

Let us ask Mary, our Blessed Mother, to help us to have her Son as our way, our truth, and our life — our model, our guide, and our strength.

ⁱ Readings: Acts 6:1–7; Ps. 33:1–2, 4–5, 18–19; 1 Pet. 2:4–9; John 14:1–2.

ⁱⁱ Luke 24:34; Rev. 1:18.