

First Reading: The first Christian community had a problem. The Greek-speaking converts complained to the disciples because their widows were being neglected by the Hebrew-speaking disciples who controlled the “daily distribution”: the food and other essentials they held for the common good. The Jewish disciples could have decided to split the community in two and leave the Greek-speaking disciples to handle it themselves. Instead, the diversity of the early community inspired a wise decision. The disciples’ leaders decided to split up the work among themselves and new leaders from among the Hellenists: not only the responsibility for serving the community, but also the basic ministries of preaching and serving. As a result, all the needy widows would be fed, and by those who spoke their own language. They solved a problem by fraternal dialogue and discernment.

*During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, in Malaya, a prisoner happened to escape from the prisoners' camp. He was assisted by a native fellow who led him through a thick forest and from there to freedom and back home. The native fellow walked ahead and the man followed him from behind. With great difficulty they were finding their way through thorns and bushes, and twists and turns, and the man got very tired. He then asked the native fellow, “Are you sure this is the way?” The native fellow looked at him, and in broken English he said, “There is no way. I am the way. If you want to be free and go home, then you have to just follow me.”*

In today’s gospel, Jesus tells us - “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” What do we make of this saying of Jesus? What do they mean to us? *‘I am the Way’*: means Jesus is a road. A road is a journey. And we journey to God the Father through Jesus and we call Jesus the *Way*, because he is the visible manifestation in human form of all that his Father is. As we journey with him through our earthly life in the midst of our problems and difficulties, stress and strain to the House of the Father, we have to just follow him.

St. Peter depicts our identity as Easter people in 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and encourages us to be aware of our responsibility—as *living stones* with Christ as cornerstone, to form a *spiritual building*. The rich images that we hear in this reading present our dignity as “*a chosen race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own*”.

In the Gospel, Jesus reveals, “*I am the way and the truth and the life.*” Either Jesus is, **who he says he is**, therefore we are obliged to give our whole lives to him; or his words make no sense, he is a madman so we should be against him. What does not stand, is the bland middle position that, though he isn’t divine, he is a good, kind, and wise ethical teacher. If he isn’t, who he says he is, then he isn’t admirable at all.

*Friends, Jesus compels a choice in a manner that no other religious founder does. The Buddha could claim that he had found a way that he wanted to share with his followers, but Jesus said, “**I am the way.**” Mohammed could say that, through him, the final divine truth had been communicated to the world, but Jesus said, “**I am the truth.**” Confucius could maintain that he had discovered a new and uplifting form of life, but Jesus said, “**I am the life.**” And thus, we are either with Jesus or we are against him. No other founder forces that choice as clearly as Jesus does.*

However, 'to believe' involves committing the whole self to the care of God. Do we let Christ guide us through life and point us to the ultimate victory that is ours in eternity? Our primary response to God’s self-revelation should be one of faith, faith in the one who cares about us, about our well-being and needs, our joys and sorrows. As St. Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds, we must bear witness to the Risen Jesus, who is our Way, our Truth and our Life. Amen.