

The Way, the Truth, and the Life

5th Sunday of Easter
Cycle A | May 3, 2026

WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

I remember growing up, I would always feel I was different. In fact, I was different, but in my mind, I felt no one understood me, so hiding my pain behind drugs, alcohol, and unnecessary behavior became normal. I became the bad kid who couldn't be tamed.

Later, I came to understand that the lifestyle I was living was only making my path more difficult to walk. Then came the time when I was finally tamed. I knew doing good was the best for my health and soul, so I started looking for help. I also thought, what if people refuse to help me, just like most judges look us, youngsters, up, and never look back?

However, that didn't stop me from going to church and hanging out with people who wanted what I wanted - a second chance. The change I got was to understand my purpose in life; that Jesus is here for me.

Prison didn't change me; I changed myself. The Lord knows my journey, and He never gives up on us, even if we are locked away and forgotten by society. Without the Lord, I am nothing, so I pray when I feel like falling. The Lord gives me the strength to continue going forward.

- Edward, who was in a California State Prison.



Art made by a JRJI participant

PENITENTIAL RITE

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus,

As we journey in this life,
show us the way. Keep us
close to you in truth, so
that we know we will rise
with you, the risen
prisoner, to that special
place you have prepared
for us.

We ask this through Christ,
our Lord. **R. Amen.**



LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Acts 6: 1-7

As the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them. The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

The Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Exult, you just, in the LORD;
praise from the upright is fitting.
Give thanks to the LORD on the harp;
with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Upright is the word of the LORD,
and all his works are trustworthy.
He loves justice and right;
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

See, the eyes of the LORD are upon those who fear
him,
upon those who hope for his kindness,
To deliver them from death.
and preserve them in spite of famine.

R. Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-9

Beloved: Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it says in Scripture: *Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame.* Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith: *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and A stone that will make people stumble, and a rock that will make them fall.* They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny. You are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises" of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

The Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

Gospel: John 14:1-12

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way." Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father."

The Gospel of the Lord.
R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



MEDITATION: THE WAY

(from the eyes of a chaplain)	like it was yesterday	now his life is about the way of jesus	is helpful to focus on how a life of prayer
it was fifteen years ago that oscar was in juvenile hall he was part of the meditation group i led each week	now oscar speaks of a different way a way of trying to put god as the center of your life	it is so hard to lead a way that is different from the way of easy self-fulfillment to numb pain with drugs	can make a difference dedicated to a way of life
so now in front of me was oscar he was no longer a youth but a man	<i>i am the way, truth and life</i>	<i>i am in the father and the father in me</i>	a way of life of praying of living in community and following these nine vows
i remembered back to when i visited oscar at pelican bay years later	now every day oscar meets with forty other brothers on the yard who break open the word	so oscar spoke about how important it is to meet with other brothers to try to keep walking along the way of light and from this community taking steps to give back to society praying for intentions	of this way of life: To respect myself To respect others To communicate better To listen To forgive and to seek forgiveness To respect nature To recreate non-violently To be courageous To be united in prayer
he had just decided to walk away from his former way of life a way of shanking another person who is a different color a way of drugs a way of always watching your back i remember that conversation	he spoke about how it has not always been easy sometimes he has felt that he has taken some steps backwards	the spirit of working in community	it was good to be with a modern day monk
	oscar manifested during a visit how there was a focus to his life there were no distractions pulling in another way	like monks who are dedicated to a way of prayer a way of seeing this life in an enclosed cloister	



REFLECTION: I remember a time I prayed for healing and peace in my life... I remember...
I remember...

OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father
in the words our Savior gave us:
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**R. For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you
peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our
sins, but on the faith of your Church, and
grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom
where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Grant us peace.

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away
the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called
to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter
under my roof, but only say the word and my
soul shall be healed.**

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:
Lord Jesus,
We thank you for this special day. We ask you to
give us the grace of faith and the grace to trust in
you, now and forever.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

