

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023  
Easter 5A  
Text: John 14:1-14

What is a home?  
When you think of the word  
or image  
or idea of a home,  
what comes to mind?

Perhaps you think of a building,  
made with wood and plaster,  
or brick and mortar.

Perhaps you think of home  
as a shelter from the storm,  
a place of refuge.

Perhaps when you hear the word "home,"  
you think more of the hopes and dreams  
of the people who inhabit a home.

A place where people build  
and share a life together.

A place where husbands and  
wives and families share the hopes and hurts,  
and the joys and sorrows of life.

Perhaps when you hear the word "home"  
you think of a place of solace and comfort.

A place where you feel safe and whole.

Some say home is where the heart is.  
Others say home is where you hang your hat.

Robert Frost once wrote,

*"Home is the place, where when you have to go  
there, they have to take you in."*

What do you think of when you hear the word "home"?

Somehow, somehow,  
'home' has a special place in the human heart.

It seems as though we are all longing  
for a place to call home.

Whenever we feel lonely or abandoned,  
we want to go home.

Whenever we are filled with doubt or despair,  
we want to go home.

Whenever we feel cut loose or lost,  
we want to go home.

"To feel at home."  
It's a lovely phrase.

It also expresses the deepest longings of the human heart.

But it is so often not the case.

St. Augustine gave famous expression to this longing when he wrote of God,

*"You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."*

Somehow our restless hearts  
are always looking for a place to rest,  
a place to find true and abiding peace,  
a place to call home.

Maybe we feel like  
if we only had the perfect job  
then finally we wouldn't feel so restless.

Maybe we feel like  
if we could meet that perfect someone,  
that perfect spouse or partner,  
then finally we would be ready to settle down.

Maybe we feel like  
if we can just get the kids through high school then, finally we can rest.

And yet, and yet,  
even when we land our dream job,  
and find our soulmate,  
and raise our children,  
somehow the human heart is still restless,  
still looking for a place to find true and genuine peace.

Somehow,  
we are all still longing for a place  
to truly call our home.

*"Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."*

It seems like so much of our human experience can be summed up in that phrase.

In the good times and the bad times,  
we are all longing for a place called home.

In our gospel reading today,  
we hear words that speak directly  
to the longing of the human heart for a home.

*Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled (restless). Believe in God, believe also in me. 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? And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may also be."*

This comes from a section of John's gospel  
called Jesus' "Farewell Address."

In it, Jesus is preparing his disciples  
for the time when he will no longer  
be with them in the flesh.

They must have been broken-hearted.

But Jesus assures them  
that even though their relationship is changing,  
it is not ending.

Even though he will  
no longer be with them in the flesh,  
they will remain connected.

Jesus is going to prepare a place for them  
in his Father's house,  
where they will remain united to him forever,

*"so that where I am, there you may be also."*

As this reading make clear,  
Our true home is with God...  
and Jesus,  
is preparing a place for his disciples in God's home, in God's heart.  
Our true home, ultimately, is not a place,  
but a relationship,  
a relationship that is founded in the very heart of God,  
made possible by Christ,  
and is eternal.

Here's the surprise.  
Even though the fullness of this relationship  
remains in our future,  
even now we can know the reality of this relationship.

Even now we can experience  
a foretaste of this eternal home.

You may be asking how?

When we do those things  
Christ commands us to do...

when we love one another as Christ loved us  
and gave himself for us,

then God's love will dwell in us,  
then God's love will make a home in us.

When the broken-hearted are comforted,  
then God will make a home with us.

When people lay down their lives for one another, then God will make a home with us.

When all of God's children are invited  
to God's table to share in his body and blood,  
then God will make a home with us.

That's how we do it.

"Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee."