

*Bishop Jodoin's Homely for the
5th Sunday of Easter – May 10th, 2020
In the Saint-Pierre-au-Liens church in Caraquet
(Broadcasted on the radio at 94,1 fm CKLE CJVA
and Live on the Diocese of Bathurst Facebook page)*

When I was first named pastor, it was in the northern part of the Diocese, an area I knew nothing about. When I arrived in the village, I need to find the sacristan's house to get the keys to the rectory. I then stopped at a house to ask for information. A very nice woman opened the door and told me, *"The sacristan's house... it's easy to find. No problem! You take the road to your right and go straight. After four streets, you will turn left, and then after three streets, you will turn left again, and then after the white house, you just need to go a bit further and on the right there will be a little road, and at the end is his house."* I was even more confused after all these explanations and finally, I got lost. Now if the nice woman had told me, *"Follow me, it will be my pleasure to show you where he lives!"* Things would have been very different. I would have felt confident following this person who would have become for me the path to get where I needed to go.

This is exactly what Jesus did for us. He well said to Thomas the apostle, *"I am the Road, the Truth and the Life; nobody goes to the Father without passing through me."* Instead of giving us a series of directions to follow (with the risk of getting lost), Christ our Good Shepherd preferred to personally guide us to God, his Father. He became the path, the road for us to get to his Father's house. Moreover, He not only guides us to his house, He also prepares a place for us close to Him. Like parents who lovingly prepare their child's room and favorite meal when he returns home. What could be better!

As Disciples of Christ, there is therefore no reason to be afraid. Afraid of tomorrow? Afraid of the future? Afraid of death? Because we know where we are going. It is not emptiness. It is not nothingness after death. Quite the contrary. It is to be in communion with God the Father. This is why the Lord tells us, *"Let not your heart be upset: you believe in God, believe also in me!"* Follow me! I will bring you safely!

Like Philip the apostle, we are also curious and want to know this God, Father who will one day welcome us. The answer from Jesus is clear: *"He who has seen me has seen the Father. Believe me: I am in the Father and the Father is in me."* Jesus thus made his Father known to us through his words and through his works among us. Through his whole being, He revealed to us a God who wants our happiness, a God of tenderness and mercy; a God who loves us deeply and for whom we all have a value

in his eyes; a God whose love is stronger than everything, stronger than death is. A God source of life and eternal love. Nothing can separate us from Him and nothing can separate us from all those we love.

By presenting his Father to us, Jesus also revealed to us who we really are: his beloved children and dear to his heart. Like Jesus, we are called to pose the same actions He did: gestures of love, peace, forgiveness and justice within our families, our village, and our workplace. Not only are we able to pose the same works He did, but we be able to pose even bigger works. What a beautiful message of hope and confidence Christ gave his apostles before leaving them, the same message he gives to each of us today.

This Sunday is also Mother's Day, an important day for our mothers and grandmothers, who are in God's image, being like Him, a source of life and love. You know, becoming a Mother is a lifelong project. One day you become a mother and it is forever. Children are an integral part of a mother's life. Even if, at some point, the children move away to make their own life, they remain, ever present, in the thoughts and in the heart of their mother. A mother who will worry every day for them, watch over them, stand by their side even if they do stupid things. Because the eyes of a mother always sees in them, the child that is hers, a child to love, to forgive, to care for and to protect. When I was pastor of my parishes, I often visited seniors' residences. During my visits, the main and often the only topic of conversation of the mothers and grandmothers that I met concerned their children and their grandchildren (their lives, their joys, their sorrows, their projects), and they prayed the Lord a lot for them. This proves that the bond that unites a mother to her children is unique and very strong. And when our mothers leave us to be with God, they continue to be a mother for us and to pray for us.

In the second reading today, Saint Peter emphasized that Christ is a living stone, a precious stone. The angular stone, upon which, has living stones, we must all rely on to build the Church, this spiritual construction. A mother, like Christ, is also a living stone, the angular stone upon which her children can rely on to find strength and comfort. She is the living stone who creates unity, communion among the family.

Today, on this beautiful Mother's Day, let us give grace to God for giving us mothers as sources of love and life, as unifying stones within their families. Let us also be comforted knowing that Christ has prepared a place of honor in his Father's house for the mothers and grandmothers who have already left us. In communion with the source of love and of life that is God, they continue to love us and watch over us with Mary, Mother of God who is also our Mother. Amen.