

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
COMPASS, PA

May 3, 2026 – FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YR. A

The Rev. Dr. Nina George–Hacker

Homily: “*Stop Worrying: God’s Got It*”

Acts 7:55-60 (Stephen forgives those who are stoning him and sees Jesus)
Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 (We take refuge in the Lord; to Him we commend our spirit)
1 Peter 2:2-10 (Having received God’s mercy, we are His people)
St. John 14:1-14 (Jesus promises a place for us in Heaven)

There’s a story about a couple who were on their honeymoon. They were staying at the Watergate Hotel in Washington DC, made famous by White House shenanigans during the Nixon Administration. Remembering what happened in that dark time, the new bride was concerned and asked, “What if this place is still bugged?” The groom said, “Hmm . . . Good point. I’ll look for a bug.”

He searched behind the drapes, behind the pictures, and under the rug. “Aha!” he shouted. Sure enough, under the rug was a small disc-shaped plate with four screws. He got out his Swiss army knife, unscrewed the screws, and threw both the disc and the screws in the trash.

The next morning, the hotel manager asked the newlyweds, “How was your room? How was the service? How was your stay our hotel?” Curious, the groom said, “Why, sir, are you asking us all these questions?” The hotel manager answered, “Well, you see, the room under yours complained about the chandelier falling down on them!”

Silly anecdote, but it does illustrate the reality that fear makes us do ridiculous things at times. Fear—in the form of worry and anxiety—just might be the cause of most of our problems.¹

The context of today’s Gospel lesson is Jesus’ last supper with His disciples. They have just finished eating dinner, and since it is Thursday evening, Jesus has only a few more hours with His friends. He will be crucified the next day after an exhausting evening of arrest, interrogation, and torture. If anyone had reason to worry, it was He. But what does Jesus do? He introduces *peace*. He brings calm to the situation. He looks at His disciples—who have just watched Judas leave the dinner table on a mission of betrayal—and says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” Don’t be afraid. Stop worrying.²

In fact, the disciples are *terrified* of what is coming that they don’t even understand. So how does Jesus help calm their fears? He tells them first: “Believe in God, believe also in me.” Merriam-Webster defines “belief” as “feeling sure that someone or something exists or is true or trustworthy.” In other words, Jesus is telling both His disciples and us to *trust Him*. Trust that He knows best, that with Him—God in person—all things are possible, and all will be well.

Next He tells them, “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 and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.”

Since His disciples don’t quite understand where Jesus is going—and Thomas very pointedly asks for directions—Jesus responds by explaining that He, *Himself*, is “the way.” A “way” is a path, a means of travel or transportation from one place to another. Jesus is on His way to heaven, and He is telling them—and us—that believing in Him is *our* path, *our* means of traveling to heaven. Those are the only map or directions needed by Thomas—or us.

Next, Jesus says, “I am the truth,” which is an interesting way of speaking, since we generally think of “truth” as verifiable information, a proven idea, or a scientific fact. But in the case of Jesus Christ, *a person* is The Truth. That means, all wisdom, all knowledge, all *reality*, is found in Him. And if we believe in, and trust Him, all of that will be available to us through God’s Holy Spirit. In John 16:13, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit “will lead you into all truth,” meaning lead us *to Christ*, as well as to His wisdom.

And third, Jesus tells them, “I am the life.” All life comes from God the Father, the Creator of the Universe. He gives us physical life when we are born. But Jesus is talking about *eternal life*—which only *He* can give. He explains why in the next sentence: “No one comes to the Father except through me.” That’s because there is only one God, who wants to have a relationship with every person in the world. Except that we, as sinners, could not have that relationship with a perfect God unless our sinfulness was taken away by Jesus.

Even after these amazing statements, the disciples are still nervously asking questions—How? What? Where? Who? Why? Jesus further tries to allay their anxieties by assuring them, “I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.” *Wow!* If we pray in Jesus’ Name according to God’s will, He will make sure our request gets answered. Even so, with the cross looming before them, I still think Jesus’ disciples were unable to let go of their fears and uncertainties.

King Duncan, a prolific Christian author known for his humor, relates the following story: Sometimes, if you will just wait, worries will take care of themselves. J. Arthur Rank, a devout Christian who was an early pioneer of the film industry in Great Britain, developed a system for dealing with his anxieties. Rank found he couldn’t push them out of his mind completely; they were always slipping back in. So finally he made a pact with God to limit his worrying to Wednesdays. He even made himself a little Wednesday Worry Box and placed it on his desk. Whenever a worry cropped up, Rank wrote it out and dropped it into the Wednesday Worry Box. When the following Wednesday rolled around, he would open the box to discover that only a third of the items he had written down were still worth worrying about. The rest had managed to resolve themselves.

If you have a troubled heart, ask God to give you a new perspective. Also, ask Him to give you patience so that you won’t worry about a problem that may never come. But most important of all, ask God for greater faith. Faith and trust in God through Jesus Christ is the best remedy for all of our problems. Jesus put it plainly, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.” The real reason many of us have troubled hearts is that we do not truly trust God. We hold back, uncertain that He really cares about us, or accepts us as we are.³ We also tend to wonder whether God can fix seemingly impossible problems such as the war with Iran; or the war between Russia and Ukraine; the rising prices of everything consumers need; the terrible cost of health insurance and prescription medicine; the messes being created by AI; and the dreadful isolation and loneliness so many are experiencing in our high tech world.

And that’s where remembrance is important: Remembering all the miraculous, awesome, and impossible things God has done—both throughout history, as recorded in the Bible, and in our own lives or the lives of those we know and love. When 2026 began, instead of making a list of New Year’s resolutions, I decided to make as my motto for this year Revelation 19:6, a Bible verse that is also found in Händel’s *Messiah*: “Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!” I remind myself of this whenever things seem especially dark or awful, because this verse is a triumphant declaration from heaven celebrating the sovereignty of God. It also designates the beginning of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb—the final, glorious union of Jesus Christ (the Lamb) with His Church (the Bride) in eternal communion.

As Christians, we can look forward to this consummation of all things. After all, Jesus tells us in today’s Gospel that He has gone ahead of us to make a reservation for us at His banquet table, as well as for our particular piece of heavenly real estate.

Let us pray:

Almighty God, we love You. Jesus, we believe in You as our Lord and Savior. We are sinners who are sorry for what we have thought, said, and done. Forgive us and make us new. We release ourselves—along with our worries, fears, and anxieties—into Your care. Take each of us, body and soul, and make us into the people You want us to be. Today we confess our trust in Your love for us, and our faith that we are our way to heaven. And we plan to enjoy the journey! Thank you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. *Amen.*⁴

¹ Adapt. King Duncan, “For Troubled Hearts,” n.d. [sermons.com](https://sermons.com/sermon/for-troubled-hearts/1468595) <<https://sermons.com/sermon/for-troubled-hearts/1468595>> 28 April 2026.

² Adapt. Brett Blair, “A Haven for Troubled Hearts,” n.d. [sermons.com](https://sermons.com/sermon/a-haven-for-troubled-hearts/1343160) <<https://sermons.com/sermon/a-haven-for-troubled-hearts/1343160>> 28 April 2026.

³ Adapt. King Duncan, “The Wednesday Worry Box,” from *Collected Sermons*, adapted from *Our Daily Bread*, 11 December 1999. Qtd. David Jeremiah, *Slaying The Giants In Your Life* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2001), pp. 67-68

⁴ Adapt. Joyce Meyer Ministries, 10 November 2014, Facebook post.