

## Reflections for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

Acts 11:1-18

Revelation 21:1-6

John 13:31-35

*Written by Paul McGowan. Paul is a member of the Pax Christi Executive Committee and the Coventry Justice and Peace Group.*



[www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)



### **Braced to take the strain**

Two dark moments in John's Gospel frame today's text: the departure of Judas and Simon and Peter's overconfident assertion of his steadfast faith. This is the point at which John decides to have Jesus begin his 'Farewell Discourses'. The reader of the text has to contemplate the all too understandable actions of the disciples and the baffling, yet consoling, messages of the Discourse.

There are three parts to the declaration: glory, separation, love. The glory spoken of here is the result of what Jesus has been doing and will go on to do. God's cause, and how it works, will be brought into focus. And the first move in the process has to be made by Jesus himself. Only later will the endorsement be made: 'God will in turn glorify him'.

The separation spoken of is real - akin to the loss of a parent: 'My little children, I shall not be with you much longer'. And with the separation a bewilderment, a disorientation, a fruitless search for what is beyond reach, in a place to which we are denied access for now: 'Where I am going you cannot come'. (This has been cut from the lectionary version.)

But now, time is short. Jesus is about to hand over the task to his disciples, although they are still, to all appearances, too young for it. The remedy is in them sticking together, loving one another. But they must, absolutely, take this course, otherwise the Good News will not be heard, will not even be perceived by those who need to hear it. This is why Jesus has to present it as a Commandment. It has to be understood as absolutely essential: 'By this, everyone will know'. And crucially this love that is spoken about must follow the example Jesus has been living out with them in the few months they have spent together. traipsing along behind him, not choosing the direction or grasping what Jesus was about. From now on they need to understand.

Time is up. They must brace themselves. Now they must take the strain.