

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

John 14:1-14

Year A - Easter 5, Text: John 14:1-14
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John 14:1c–16:33 is often referred to as Jesus' Farewell Discourse. We find similar discourses in Genesis 49, Deuteronomy, Joshua 24, and 1 Chronicles 28–29. None of the three synoptic Gospels contains such a lengthy discourse.

In these chapters, Jesus explains the significance of His death and departure before these events take place. The hope is that when these events do take place, the disciples will not despair but will interpret them through the eyes of faith. Surfacing throughout the discourse are assurances of Jesus' continuing presence, comments about why He must return to His Father, the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the future of His community, and a call to focus on living a life of servanthood.

In the preceding chapter (ch. 13), Jesus celebrates a meal with His disciples and washes their feet. Although John does not make reference to Jesus praying in a garden, he does include what is referred to as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer in ch. 17.

Verse 14:1: In John 14, Jesus speaks of His departure and return. Verses 1–14 consist of a dialogue between Jesus and His disciples. Note the bookend statements that Jesus makes in 14:1 and 14:27: "Do not let your hearts be troubled."

Verses 14:2–3: Although these verses contain "departure" language, Jesus' ascension did not mean a withdrawal of His presence. It had to do with a transformation of His presence in that Jesus continues to dwell among His people invisibly. Vs. 3 contains a rare Johannine reference to Jesus' *parousia*. Indeed, the invisible but ever-present Jesus will eventually reappear visibly.

Verses 14:4–7: Thomas seems to have interpreted Jesus' reference to "the way" in terms of a geographical road-map. Jesus' "I am" statement in 14:6 points to something much more profound; He refers to Himself as the point of access to life with God. Note again Je-

sus' reference to Himself as "the gate" in ch. 10. John 14:6 expresses the central theological conviction of John's Gospel: Jesus is the tangible presence of God in the world (cf. 1:1-18). Jesus' words point to the intimacy of the relationship between God the Father and Jesus His Son. To embrace Jesus in faith makes possible a new experience of God as Father.

Verses 14:8–11: Philip's request points to the fact that the disciples do not understand Jesus' very presence in the world as the incarnate Word and that all He says and does reveals God to them.

Verses 14:12–14: In this section, Jesus focuses on the works that the disciples will do after His "hour" (cross), resurrection, and ascension. After they understand the full story of God's love for humanity, they will be empowered as never before to tell and live that story. They will devote themselves to making the invisible presence of Jesus visible in their own lives. Still today, Jesus' brothers and sisters are to show others the Jesus they want them to believe in and follow in all that they believe, think, do, and say.

