

May 21, 2017

6th Sunday of Easter

I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you!

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

Psalm 66:1-7, 16, 20

1Peter 3:15-18

John 14:15-21

In the first reading Philip goes to Samaria where he proclaimed Christ. The crowds paid attention to him when they saw the signs he was performing; the unclean of spirit were cleansed, and those crippled and paralyzed were healed. Many were baptized and a great joy came upon them. When Peter and John heard of this they came, laid hands upon them and the people received the Holy Spirit.

The Psalmist tells his listeners of what God had done for him as well as for the people. Tremendous deeds such as holding back the water so the Israelites could cross the river are things to shout joyfully about, things to praise, and reasons to rejoice.

In the second reading Peter exhorts us to sanctify Christ in our hearts. We need always be ready, he says, to give explanations to unbelievers in a gentle and reverend way, and with a clear conscience and in this way those who try to defame us will themselves be shamed. We are not to forget that Christ's suffering is what opened up the path to God for us.

In the Gospel Jesus reminds us that if we love him then we are to keep his commandments. He prays to the Father that another Advocate, the Spirit of Truth be with us always. The world doesn't accept, know, or see this Advocate, but we, who observe the commandments show our love and the Father will love us, Jesus will love us, even reveal himself to us.



**The Father answers the prayers of the Son  
And the Advocate,  
The Spirit of Truth is sent to us.**

In the Gospel Jesus connects two very important ideas, namely, love and obedience. Love is not simply an emotional feeling but rather encompasses a commitment to follow through with actions that will benefit another. It is in that love that we can witness to our faith and yet be gentle and reverend even if those listening are rude. Only God knows the afterthoughts and the effect our kindness, calmness and patience will eventually have on others. Christ suffered for all and our love must follow the example and be shared with all.

Philip brought change to the crippled and paralyzed that were healed and while he pointed out the way to them it was Jesus who gave them the strength to walk in it. Peter announced mysteries to this listeners but it is the heavenly Father that unlocks their secret meaning. Jesus mentioned the commandments but more importantly reveals the spirit of the law. We may hear beautiful words but it is the Spirit that imparts understanding to the hearing. Many things affect us outwardly but it our Lord that instructs us inwardly and enlightens mind and heart.

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