

Sixth Sunday of Easter, Cycle A

May 21, 2017

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Psalm 66; 1 Peter 3:15-18; John 14:15-21

Jesus continues to prepare his disciples for the time when he will not be physically with them. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Love is not just words or interior feelings. Authentic love is manifested through action. Do our actions reflect our love for Jesus?

To help us know Jesus love for us, Jesus will ask the Father to send us another Advocate, a Counselor, the Spirit of Truth, who will dwell with us and in us, that we may know God's love. The Holy Spirit will serve as an intercessor before God, a source of strength in faith and the teacher of truth. The Holy Spirit is present and active both in the Church as a community and in her individual members. Both the Church herself and each baptized person, therefore, can rightly be called a "temple of the Holy Spirit" (John 14:23). That we not only know God's love but we will be his witnesses to others, to the world.

Jesus also says that "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you." I will not leave you orphans. The spiritual presence of Christ remains on the earth after the Ascension. He is present in his Church, in his Word, in the liturgy, in his priestly ministers; in a unique way, he is present Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine.

Philip proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ to the people of Samaria and many accepted it, especially as they saw the signs. Unclean spirits came out, the paralyzed and the lame were healed. They were filled with joy! Then Peter and John came when they heard the people of Samaria had received the word of God that they might receive the Holy Spirit. This reminds of Sacrament of Confirmation. Many of our youth received the fullness of the Holy Spirit at their Confirmation about a month ago. They are empowered, as we are, to live a life abundant in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11, 1 Corinthians 12). We need these gifts, especially now, to be faithful to the Gospel and not fall prey to temptations we face each day.

God's Love never fails. Jesus had to prepare the disciples for his departure from earth. He needed them to understand that while he was not with them in person that he would be with them every day. The Holy Spirit came from the love of God the Father and God the Son so that we could know God's love. That we could be empowered to live the Christian life when it would be impossible to live it without the Holy Spirit. We need the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. We need the supernatural power so when we are asked to give a reason why we are Christians, why we are Catholic, we can. We must stand up for the Truth. We must be the love of Christ in our world today. We must bring healing to our families, to our society and ultimately the world.

If we love our faith, if we believe in life everlasting, would we not want others to know and believe as well? We have many resources available to help us deepen our faith. Let us take time to help ourselves and others grow in holiness so one day we will spend eternity with God.

References from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

1066–1075 – Celebration of Christian faith in liturgy
1286–1289, 1293-1296, 1300 – Confirmation. Apostolic practice.
 The essential rite of the sacrament
1302-1314 – Effects of confirmation. Its recipient and minister
2615 – In the Holy Spirit, Christian prayer is communion of love.
729 – Promise of the Spirit of Truth.

Acts 8 -1086

Psalm 66 - 220

1 Peter 3 - 816, 2015

John 14 - 2068, 2074-2075, 687, 692, 2466, 2615, 521, 788

Deacon Ron Smith

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