

HOMILY for 6th SUNDAY of EASTER – Year A

By now, we have learned that Jesus rose from the dead & had appeared to some of the disciples. Then we're told that He was returning to Heaven to be with God the Father. His departure would leave a big hole in our hearts & make us worry a lot more. For He would no longer be with us to support & guide us. Thankfully, Jesus has always cared about us & had some concerns about our upcoming days. Hence, He decided to send us the Holy Spirit to protect & help us. Today's Gospel shares with us Jesus' intention upon His departure as following: "...I will ask the Father; & He will give you the Paraclete to be with you always – the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, since it neither sees Him nor recognizes Him; but you can recognize Him because He remains with you & will be within you. I will not leave you orphaned; I will come back to you." So, evidently Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit to guide us during His absence & keep our company. The Holy Spirit will help us carry on the mission that Jesus left behind for us until His return. We have nothing to scare & worry about.

What will the Holy Spirit do for us? When should we come to the Holy Spirit for help? Among the persons of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit might be the most difficult one for us to visualize. We have seen how Jesus looks like even though most of His pictures depict Him as the white European-looking male. Meanwhile, God the Father usually looks like a wise, old grandfather with long, white hair & beard. But, the two typical images being used to describe the Holy Spirit are the white dove & tongues of fire. The reason for the white dove to represent the Holy Spirit is because on the occasion of Jesus' baptism a similar image was seen descending on Him as John baptized Him in the Jordan River. Another image of the Holy Spirit that could be seen on the day of Pentecost was tongues of fire standing on each of the disciples. Remember that these disciples were huddling in a closed room after hearing the news of Jesus' resurrection & departure for Heaven when they saw this image. Besides those images, we have not seen the Holy Spirit appear in other forms. In fact, the Holy Spirit has rarely been seen in our daily life. But, we can feel the effects of the Holy Spirit in our daily life & throughout our human history. Our lives would not be the same without the help of the Holy Spirit.

One of the first blessings that the Holy Spirit had done for the early Church was to give them encouragement & reassurance. The early disciples just lost their leader & dear friend. They certainly felt lost & confused about their life mission & future. They had no leader & no roadmap on what they were supposed to do. Moreover, the authority that arrested & killed Jesus could do the same to them. They had to hide & look for ways to survive. They wondered if it would be worthwhile to risk their lives for Jesus' mission of saving souls. While they were at the crossroad of their lives, the Holy Spirit came to their rescue & showed them the way. It gave them a little nudge to go out to the world & preach the Good News of the risen Jesus Christ to everyone.

However, that is not all that the Holy Spirit would do for the people of God. Today's First Reading shares with us what the Holy Spirit had done next for the early Christian Church as following, "Philip went down to the town of Samaria & there proclaimed the Messiah. Without exception, the crowds that heard Philip & saw the miracles he performed attended closely to what he had to say. There were many who had unclean spirits, which came out shrieking loudly. Many who were paralytics or cripples, & these were cured. The rejoicing in that town rose to fever pitch." Evidently the Holy Spirit helped Philip perform many miracles. In case you don't

know, it was also the Holy Spirit who helped Jesus carry out a lot of wonderful miracles during His years of ministry. One of the miracles that the Holy Spirit helped Jesus & Philip complete was to drive out unclean spirits. Our current world sure needs the Holy Spirit to help it drive away lots of evil & hateful spirits. For they have caused lots of pain & suffering in our world with all the recent shootings & violent acts. It also needs the Holy Spirit to bring it some healing like it did to the paralytics & cripples in the Gospel time. We can see all the wonderful blessings that the Holy Spirit could bring the Church & its people.

Let me name a couple more things that the Holy Spirit could bring us. Recently some of our children were confirmed & excited to receive the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, & fear of the Lord. They definitely need those gifts to help them on their road to adulthood. But, the Holy Spirit does not stop there. As you might know, the Holy Spirit can help us work for & acquire its fruits in our lives. Those are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, & chastity. We sure need those fruits to cheer us up & give us hope on our earthly journey.

My dear brothers & sisters, the Holy Spirit helped God the Father create our beautiful world & God the Son carry out His work of salvation. Our world needs the help of the Holy Spirit more now than ever. It needs the Holy Spirit to bring it healing & lots of miracles in this challenging time. Let's come to the Holy Spirit to plead for help & guidance in this confusing & dark period in our human history.