

7th SUNDAY of EASTER **YEAR C – June 2, 2019**



Before we continue with the liturgy and welcome our Lord to our altar in the form of the bread that comes down from heaven, let me share some pastoral thoughts about what God is asking of us in the liturgy of the word. If what I say does not connect with your life where you are now, look at the readings again and you will see and hear a message that is meant for you.

In the first reading (Acts 7:55-60), we hear about a man named Stephen. He was a witness on behalf of Jesus and was condemned to death. As he lay dying, he asked God to forgive those who were stoning him to death. You will recall that our Amish brothers and sisters also forgave the man who killed their children in their schoolhouse. Forgiving - it's not an easy thing to do but it can be done. We can do it.

In Matthew's Gospel in chapter 16 Jesus reminds us how important it is to forgive others. In fact, he tells us if we do not forgive others, we will not be forgiven by God. Remember the golden rule. We find it in the gospel of St. Luke in chapter 6, verse 31 - Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. And as you do unto others, so God will do unto you.

In the second reading (Rev22:12-14, 16-17, 20) and in the Gospel (John 17:20-16) we are told that Jesus will come back soon and his hope is that we all may be one - as he is with the Father and the Father is with Him.

The early Christians believed that Jesus would return in their lifetime, but they were wrong. The second letter of St. Peter addresses that erroneous belief and sets the record straight. You can read all about in the second letter of St. Peter, 3:8-9.

The second coming of Jesus can have two different senses. It can refer to the hour of our death or it can refer to the end of the world. In either case, our challenge is to be ready when Jesus comes for us. Recall what Jesus says in Matthew's Gospel in chapter 24 . He will come for us at a time we least suspect. When do you suppose that will be for you? It could be today, or it could be years from now. It really doesn't matter when. What matters is being ready.

In the meantime, we have work to do here on planet earth before we cross the bridge of death into eternity. If you want to know what that work is all about, take out your bible and read the section in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 25 beginning with verse 35.

It tells us what the purpose of life is all about and it tells us how to get ready for the second coming of Jesus - whether that be at the end of the world or the end of our lives.

For a few moments in silence, reflect on how well you are prepared – right now.

