

Homily 6th Sunday of Easter cycle A

Good morning my brothers and sisters of St Catherine's standing here in the Church sanctuary at this different time, with the separation. We have a sense of not being alone. In a real way we sense physically as well as the spiritual dimensions of our relationship with Our Lord. We also see and sense the beauty of creation as well as a spiritual sense of well being within our hearts through the Sacraments, God's Word & especially the Eucharist. We continue to pray that we will soon be physically together as we worship. We each have stories of being separated from home. In years past away from home while I served in the Marines

- Standing on the deck of an LST looking out at the Mediterranean Sea at night toward the horizon
- Looking out at the sea from the shores of Okinawa the beach highlighted by the moonlight and the waves sparkled as they crashed onto the beach

We all can reflect on those moments from no matter where we stood knowing while our physical home was far away we are that same person looking and reflecting on who we are and as Jesus tells us in the Gospel "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." ...

Fill me Oh Lord with your Spirit for without you I am a small bumbling fool. I am learning though it has taken a long time, still a distance to go, help me Lord. You call all of us when very young so full of spirit and independence. Layla my 17th month old granddaughter comes to mind and on the other side of the spectrum the very old. I remember Helen Cook who was close to 100 and has gone home to the Lord. Helen had a beautiful smile, a loving heart containing years of stories and loving memories. We just celebrated Mother's day and soon Father's Day recalling the memories of those with us and those who have gone ahead. We are not alone – Jesus tells us, I am with you in the Holy Spirit- giving us strength and guidance. Even as Fr Mark mentioned last week about becoming lost and no GPS, to guide them back to the point of choosing the right turn.

Some who are hungry seek direction through the smell of bacon, others seek a good omelet full of all the right ingredients (not bacon) but in all reality – whatever odors of the

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kitchen attract one's longing. All truly seek the food and drink that satisfies the deepest hunger. The bread and wine of the Eucharist which is the Gift of the Holy Spirit who gives the power of Grace the priest needs – to make the gift Christ gave us possible. Be not afraid, I am with you always!

Gospel [John 14: 15-21] ... And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him. ... How appropriate in light of our physical separation to become aware of our spiritual connection of being in Christ and with Him. In this life, we walk a common journey al-be it walking our own personal steps.

Becoming aware of something deeper can occur while passing by something like a beautiful rose bush in bloom day after day and one day you are struck with the question what is the source of this beauty? Layla, 17 months now has as one can see many amazing characteristics: the intensity of her gaze, her actions of independence, and her inquisitive nature. Though Layla is rarely still, it is the intensity of her gaze that is very noticeable when she suddenly stops to look. Her eyes become wide as she drinks in the sight whether it is a blade of grass swaying in the wind, an insect, a bird or maybe a passerby with a dog. It is said "the eyes are windows to the soul". The gaze is similar when Layla decides to go explore and she will just walk away. But as she approaches the limits of safe distance her mother will call her to come back (the routine is usually the same), Layla will stop after 2 or 3 calls. She will then turn giving the gaze "What's the problem?" She holds the gaze for 2 or 3 seconds and on the next call she slowly decides to walk back very slowly. **The response is classic, and we have all developed our own form of response when we slow walk the way back to the turning point of choice.** Our Lord wants our operative thought to be of "Love". Jesus in the Gospel said to his disciples ***"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."*** He knows us better than we know ourselves and continues ***"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, ..."***

Jesus asked the Father to send another Advocate to come upon each of us, and the Church to strengthen and enlighten her to give counsel and wisdom. Holy Spirit come give your

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people the outpouring of your grace: teach, console and enlighten all to whom you welcome and to seek your wisdom with the depth of love only possible through the Holy Spirit.

Dear brothers & sisters, the Holy Spirit's many gifts are sent through the love of the Father at the request of the Son. This speaks volumes affecting the very depths of our relationships. Making evident and continually unveiling the core needs in our lives whether as husband & wife; son or daughter, our devotion and dedication out of love and the desire to serve the one who created us. Guiding us in our vocations: of marriage, priesthood, religious or single to give as Christ gave and teaches us. The strength of the Holy Spirit comes to give love, a deep, deep love, no strings, no give backs, just a love to open the gates allowing the grace to well out. The gift of grace upon those around us, those in need, those forgotten & struggling in life because they feel alone. This could be alleviated through a loving outreach we could give. In our yes we can receive and share the love the Holy Spirit brings for we will be asked to explain our life's actions to the Lord. St. Catherine's is a very generous parish in so many ways. **The question for our reflection: Is knowing in faith as we continually realize the infinite gifts of the Holy Spirit is there more we can do, beginning with prayer to share the Gift of the Word and the Gift of the Eucharist?** The word that encompasses this sharing is "Evangelization". The coming of the Holy Spirit that Jesus requested to the Father in today's Gospel to send another Advocate. Brothers & Sisters we will soon celebrate this Pentecost the Holy Spirit's coming.

It is those grace giving moments when we stop and gaze standing at a window, hearing & seeing, the fluttering of leaves and branches on the trees. We are also blessed with moments to watch the eyes of the young like Layla drink in these views of nature. We as adults are blessed in so many ways that God blesses and teaches us. – God's Spirit is present especially in our listening. **Let us pray for one another as we sing "Come Holy Spirit"!**

God bless

Deacon Mike