

**May 24, 2020**

Acts 1:12-14; 1 Peter 4:13-16; Jn 17:1-11a

I think we can all appreciate our being able to return to Mass in church. It is a rebirth of sorts - and we pray today for all who are here, and for all those who are still at home and watching this on their computers. Shortly we hope to be past the whole pandemic crisis and be able to return to a more norm life with out fear and need to isolate. During this time some have had a stronger sense that Jesus has not left us orphans - even if we are physically separated from each other. The Spirit continues to guides us, the Church continues to preach the message of the Gospel, we continue to serve and support one another, and God protects us. Many of us have been protected by God from this pandemic in ways we don't know - yet we still cooperate with that protection by using hand sanitizer and masks - we are all united together with each other and all united together with God in Jesus.'s Body. That is a lot of what Jesus is saying to us today.

This Thursday we celebrated the Ascension. After the resurrection Jesus needed to return to the Father to accomplish the next step in the plan. God the Son enters into his glory in heaven so that all those joined to that body can enter heaven, and so that God the Holy Spirit may come down to us to be a daily helper and guide. Jesus says in the Gospel today: *I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.* After his ascension Jesus could allow that resurrected body to fill all things in every way, we all could become part of that body, and Jesus could return to us on a daily basis in the form of the Holy Spirit.

We will reflect on that outpouring of the Spirit next weekend at Pentecost - but what do we do while we are waiting for that outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our own lives - waiting for our own personal Pentecost? Before answering this, we might want to ask: what does it mean to receive an outpouring of the Spirit in our lives? A lot of times in life - even for those who are very close to God - seems to be a waiting for an experience of the power of the Spirit. We pray privately, we worship at Mass (when we can be there), we try to live as God demands - but we still don't experience a powerful presence of the Holy Spirit very often - if at all. We can quickly think that this is because the Spirit is not present - but that is too quick a conclusion.

God's Spirit often moves among us and through situations in ways that do not stand out to us, and that do not bring up a specific emotion in us. The Spirit is sometimes seen by just a though entering your mind, or by a chance meeting with a person, or by a simple event occurring that seems to be a coincidence. The working of the Spirt that Jesus tells us he will send us can be

very obvious, and one can have an emotional response to the Spirit's action - but sometimes the Spirit moves in mysterious ways and answers prayers with quiet methods.

So What should we do if we feel we are in a time of waiting for the the presence of the Spirit? In the First reading we heard: *After Jesus had been taken up to heaven the apostles returned to Jerusalem ... All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer.* They were afraid and feeling lonely and had not experienced the Spirit. They didn't give up but engaged the life of Jesus Christ and maintained an openness to the Spirit through prayer. So should we. If difficult times come, don't be discouraged - the power that Jesus sends down as a result of his glorification will come to those who are faithful. The second reading reminds us: *Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly.* Hard times come, and hard times go - rather than become down due to them - look to Jesus so that we may one day rejoice. While we share in this life of Christ as members of his Body, we are empowered to act as Jesus presence in the lives of others as we await that coming of Jesus to us in the Spirit. We can be ready for the Spirit in whatever ways it moves.

Jesus has died for us, rose from the dead, and now that he gives us a way to heaven united to his Body. The eternal, non-material, timeless God enters into the universe of space and time at the incarnation. While joined to a human body, the Son as the eternal priest can perform the sacrifice that cancels humanity's debit to God for sin. This week he returns to heaven so that he can prepare a place for us (as He promised a couple weeks back) and also so that he can send his Spirit to be with us and be the life of the Body. That same Spirit will transform the bread and wine of our Eucharist into his physical presence, it moves among us in a mysterious way each day, that Spirit is the one who moves through us as we minister to others. Many of us today are privileged to be present as we enter into that timeless sacrifice during this Mass, and also privileged to receive that Body and Blood that makes us more and more members of his Body. Jesus forms the Body on earth that is His Church, and next week at Pentecost will breath the breath of the life-giving Spirit into that Church to be His presence on Earth.

We are called to be parts of that Body, to have that Spirit of God moving through us as it gives life to the Body. We really are privileged to be so united. Jesus said last week: *I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you.* In this one Body lies the physical presence of Jesus, and the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit. Where that Body is present there is God - and when we unite ourselves to that Body we become united to God - and also united to one another. We can draw strength knowing that we are never alone as long as we are in that Body - we are one with the Father as Jesus is one with the Father, and one with each other - joined in that one Body.