

Homily Easter 6 - Year C - May 26, 2019

Promises made, promises broken. "I promise that I will never do that again." You may have said that to your parents, to your spouse, to your friend. We often make promises. We often break promises or even forget promises. Cynically Napoleon once said: "The best way to keep one's word is never to give it." Even Shirley MacLean weighed in on the notion of promises when she said: "It is useless to hold a person to anything he says when he is in love, drunk or running for office."

Nevertheless, promises are a part of our lives. Promises move us forward. We expect others to keep their promises to us even if, perhaps, we may fail in our promises to others.

In today's gospel, Jesus is making promises to his disciples: he will be with them always, he will send the Holy Spirit, he will give peace. We expect those promises to be fulfilled in us.

In fact, they have been fulfilled. The scriptures are filled with stories of God fulfilling his promises to humanity even back to the days of Abraham and Moses. God sent his Son. Jesus remains with us in the Eucharist. We have gifts of the Holy Spirit given to us at Confirmation. Even in the early church, as we read in the first reading, the apostles consulted the Holy Spirit to resolve issues of belief.

But what about our promises to God. Remember a few weeks ago, we stood in church in renewed our baptismal promises. We declared that we would reject Satan and all his empty promises. We declared that we would reject the devil so that we would not be mastered by sin. We declared that we wanted to live in the freedom of God's children.

But, how long did it take after those promises were made before we took out our anger on someone. Or perhaps we told a so-called white lie that was really a basic lie. Perhaps we were disgruntled, annoyed, self-righteous or even proud even before we left the parking lot after Easter Sunday Mass. How long did it take before our Easter promises transformed into a forgotten historical moment?

But also at that same time we recommitted ourselves to our faith. We expressed our belief in God, we acknowledged our need for God, we avowed our belief in the resurrection from the dead, the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting. But, in professing our faith, did we later pretend that God wasn't part of our lives, or that his church really doesn't know what she

is talking about or that God is so forgiving that he won't hold me accountable for the gift of life that he has given me?

Has our fidelity to God matched God's fidelity to us? How faithful have we been in our promises to him. Keeping God ever present in our lives will lead us to ongoing fidelity to God. There is a prayer attributed to St. Patrick called the Breastplate of St. Patrick. It is too long to quote in its entirety, but a few of the lines read as follows: I arise today through a mighty strength; I arise today through the strength of Christ's birth with his Baptism; I arise today in the obedience of the angels; I arise today in the strength of heaven; I arise today through God's wisdom to guide me; Christ with me, before me, behind me and in me.

God has been faithful to us; now we must be faithful to our God.