

**Keeping our hearts open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (Acts 8:5-8, 14-17, 1Peter 3:15-18, John 14:15-21)**

Brothers and sisters, this is the last Sunday before we celebrate the feast of Ascension. On this 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter Jesus is giving his parting words to his disciples before he departs to Heaven. He actually began giving his last words last week in chapter 14 of John's gospel also called the farewell discourses. Last week Sunday Jesus promised us that there are many rooms in his father's house, and he will come back and take us there. The main theme of Jesus' last words to us today is that we should look forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus says, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him." Of course, the coming of the Holy Spirit will be celebrated on the Feast of Pentecost. So, Jesus assures his disciples that they will not be left alone on their own, but he will be with them in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus says the Spirit is the Advocate. Other versions of the bible translate the Holy Spirit as Comforter, Helper and Counsellor. The word translated as "Advocate" in its original Greek language is "Parakletos," which suggests someone who comes alongside another person to assist him. All these translations teach us about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Thus, the departure of Jesus to Heaven brings in a new life, that is Life in the Spirit. The disciples and Christians will be taught and led by the Holy Spirit.

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles gives us an example of how the Holy Spirit used the Apostles to spread the Christian message. We heard in the first reading that Philip, as a result of the persecution, had gone outside the boundaries of Jerusalem to preach and more and more gentiles were being converted. We are told Peter and John laid their hands on the converts and they received the Holy Spirit. St. Peter in our 2nd reading teaches that it is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives that enables us to bear all kinds of persecution.

Dear friends in Christ, in our daily lives we do meet people who are going through various kinds of persecutions, problems and sorrows. These people need to hear the good news; hence we are missionaries to such people. As we prepare to gather together once again to worship in church, let us keep our hearts open to the Holy Spirit to guide us in renewing our public worship activities and missionary works.

**AMEN**

**BY FR EMMANUEL SUBAAR**