

Sixth Sunday of Easter May 17, 2020



As Jesus prepared the apostles for the time when he would no longer be with them physically, and knowing that they would face hardship, trials, and persecution in the future, he promised them an Advocate, the Holy Spirit. Through baptism that same Spirit dwells within us, always with us to guide us in the truth of God's love and strengthen us so that we may know Christ and live as Christ's people. Now, as in every time, God knows it is not always easy to live as a Christian. With the assurance of the Holy Spirit's presence, we find the grace to love Jesus and to keep the Lord's commandments.

STRENGTHENED TO LIVE AS CHRIST'S OWN

We might look at the world around us and conclude that this is the most challenging time in history during which to live as a person of faith. Yet we know this is not so. Throughout the ages, people of faith have faced mockery, persecution, and even death as a result of their commitment to Christ. Still, it is important for us to acknowledge the challenge of living as a Christian today, when faith is viewed with ambivalence at best, and often with antagonism. Some do not understand how faith and reason can sit side by side, even though many of the world's greatest scientific discoveries have been made by people of faith. Others see the failures of the Church or its leaders and discount faith as a result. We rely on the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit to be with us when we are mocked or simply misunderstood on account of our faith in Jesus Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, we will find the grace to live with conviction as Christian people.

THE REASON FOR OUR HOPE

Saint Peter admonishes us, "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." One of the greatest gifts of faith in our lives is our hope in Christ Jesus. Through Christ, we keep our eyes on the wider view of life here on earth and everlasting life with God. We know that the trials and challenges of today do not have the final word, and do not have power over us. With the presence of the Advocate, we have the help we need to live as God directs and desires, so that the world might come to know Christ through the witness of our lives. This is a hope-filled, meaningful way of life. When so much of our surrounding culture speaks of impermanence and momentary distractions, we have the hope of meaning and purpose today and the promise of eternal life to come.

Today's Readings: Acts 8:5–8, 14–17; Ps 66:1–3, 4–5, 6–7, 16, 20; 1 Peter 3:15–18; John 14:15–21