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“No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”
- John 15

Sixth Week of Easter: May 5 - 11, 2013

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Sixth Week of Easter

John's Gospel offers us comfort and peace in a very direct way for the **6th Sunday of Easter**. Jesus says “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.”

On Thursday in most of the world, we celebrate **The Ascension of the Lord**.

Our Easter season readings from **Acts of the Apostles** continue this week. We read of Paul converting a wealthy cloth trader, Lydia; of the dramatic conversion and baptism of the jailer and his family; Paul's bold speech to the crowd at the Areopagus and his fearless preaching in Corinth, despite the growing threat from the Jews. We also see how followers of Paul catch the fire of his faith and now begin to convert others.

In **John's Gospel**, we realize we are approaching Pentecost in a few weeks as Jesus begins to speak of his leaving the earth and of the coming of the “Advocate” - the Spirit of Truth. The image of the Trinity is clear: “when the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father....” To his disciples, the idea of his leaving fills their hearts with grief but Jesus reassures them, “it is better for you that I go” so that the Spirit can come to them. The Spirit “will guide you to all truth.” Jesus promises, “Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy.” “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.” “Whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you.”

Daily Prayer This Week

We sometimes keep the idea of the Trinity firmly in our heads, rather than move it to our hearts. Our logical, practical minds cannot make sense out of three persons in one God.

But clearly this week Jesus wants us to have some sense of what the Trinity is - a continuation of the seamless love and identity between him and the Father. It is the Spirit of that love between them that lives on in us today, guiding us and helping us to follow the message of Jesus' life. It is that Spirit of Jesus that is with us in each of the difficult and joyous moments of our days.

Jesus invites us to discover the power of the Spirit in our lives through an awareness of “the Advocate” supporting us each day. Jesus encourages us in the same kind of intimate relationship he has with the Father. The startling idea of this close, personal conversation one might have with a parent, models for us how we can speak to him.

If we feel tongue-tied or don't know where to begin, that is exactly the place to start. Each morning as we awaken, we can speak from our hearts.

Loving Jesus, I'm not sure how to do this. I can feel in my heart an emptiness or longing for something deeper in my relationship, but I don't always know where to begin. Help me to open my heart to you this day, and to carry with me the

Whether the **Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord** is celebrated this Thursday or on Sunday, May 12, it is a stirring story from **Acts of the Apostles** of Jesus leaving his disciples and promising them the support of the Holy Spirit. The **Gospel of Luke** tells of Jesus as he led his disciples out “as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven.”

On Sunday, most of the world will celebrate the **Seventh Sunday of Easter**. As if in preparation for Pentecost Sunday on May 19, we read in Acts of the stoning of Stephen, who is “filled with the Holy Spirit.” In John's Gospel the poetic words of Jesus are a love song to us as he prays to his Father, “Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me....”

sense of how much you love me and how much you want this kind of personal relationship with me.

Let me feel your Spirit present with me as I face the challenges of the day and let me live my life this day as your follower, in the peace of your love.

It is a simple prayer and one that we can remember as we go about our day, head to a meeting, stand in the kitchen or fold laundry. It is not complicated to have a closer relationship with God but it takes focus. And always, we can end our day with a simple prayer of thanks for the many blessings of the day.

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