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Sixth Sunday of Easter - 22 May 2022

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22 May 2022

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

We are nearing the end of the Season of Easter. Throughout we have heard readings of how Christ's activity in the world has moved from the historical Jesus himself to the living Church. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that this is possible, and it features again in today's readings. The Church has come alive and is being formed into a body that will do all that Jesus commands. This weekend also concludes *Laudato si'* week.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus you came to show us the way so that we can have life.
Lord, have mercy.

You came to give us your peace so that we will not fear.
Christ, have mercy.

You gave us your Spirit so that we would be comforted.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

Grant, almighty God,
that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days of joy,
which we keep in honor of the risen Lord,
and that what we relive in remembrance
we may always hold to in what we do.

Commentary by Gerard Moore

With the Season of Easter into its sixth week the collect is an encouragement to keep alive the celebration of the great feast. The centerpiece is the resurrection. However, the focus falls onto the hearts and actions of the faithful. The prayer seeks an ongoing depth of joyous devotion in tandem with a tenacious fidelity to the implications which the celebrations have for everything we do. There are a number of curious features to the oration. The verb 'relive' does not fully capture the sense of

action and involvement of the original Latin, which carries a sense of 'running through'. Moreover, the complete oration is a modern composite, with various clauses taken from a preface during a fast, a December Mass for the feast of John the evangelist, and an Easter liturgy, all from the ancient sources.

First Reading

Acts 15:1–2, 22–29

The emerging Church is having to deal with significant issues dividing the body. Though a conciliar approach, guided by the Holy Spirit, they move forward in the mission to bring God's salvation to the world.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 67(66):2–3, 5–6, 8

O God, let all the nations praise you! (v. 4) or Alleluia.

Not only a select people but all of creation, every living being, is called to experience the blessing of God and exult the Lord.

Second Reading

Revelation 21:10–14, 22–23

John's Revelation speaks of a new Jerusalem; a vision of a holy dwelling place of God, built on the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of Christ, united in God's salvific plan.

Gospel Reading

John 14:23–29

The Gospel reading speaks of an Advocate, the Holy Spirit that will teach and remind Jesus' followers of all Jesus has said. It will help them move forward in love, doing the will of God that has been revealed in Christ.

Reflection

Last week we saw an important excerpt from what we termed the 'Last Supper Discourses' which is what many commentators call the long teaching offered by Jesus in chapters 13-17 in John's Gospel. It prefaces the Passion that follows starting at chapter 18 and includes some of Jesus' most memorable sayings. The same block of text is also known as the 'Farewell Discourses' because much of Jesus' words refer to his parting. Moreover, they are full of words of comfort from

Jesus as his beloved disciples will soon be left without their master. Hence there are calls to not be afraid and be at peace (16:33), to have faith (14:1), to remain in the love of Christ (15:9) and to keep to Jesus' teaching and commandments (14:15). Many of these elements are seen in today's Gospel reading too.

Perhaps sensing their confusion and anxiety (what little the disciples say through these discourses indicates this very point), Jesus is preparing them for what is to come. So the heart of today's reading includes those beautiful words from Jesus; 'Peace I leave you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled' (14:27 NRSV). The language is striking because Jesus does not offer a peaceful sentiment, a hope for peace, a sense of good will. Rather, it is 'my peace'. It is, as the lectionary translation puts it, Jesus' very own peace. It is the presence of Jesus and, because of this, even though Jesus is going, something is being left for Christ's followers.

Of course, this is pre-empted by the notion of the Holy Spirit which is what Jesus mentions prior to the gift of peace. Though distinct, they appear linked; the Holy Spirit will bear the imprint, the very life of Jesus Christ and, so, will also include the peace that is also properly God's (and thus cannot be found 'in the world'). Moreover, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, is something that is to come in place of Jesus' presence. Christ is to return to the Father, that is what is about to happen though the death and resurrection that is about to unfold in the Gospel narrative. However, the listeners need not be afraid at this absence because this will usher in a new age. An 'in between' time where Christ returns to the Father but will not be entirely absent either. This is what is captured in the sending of the Spirit. Christ is both absent to our senses, having gone 'ahead of us' to the end of all things with God the Father, yet is with us in the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Advocate that speaks in Christ's name and teaches us all that Christ says to us.

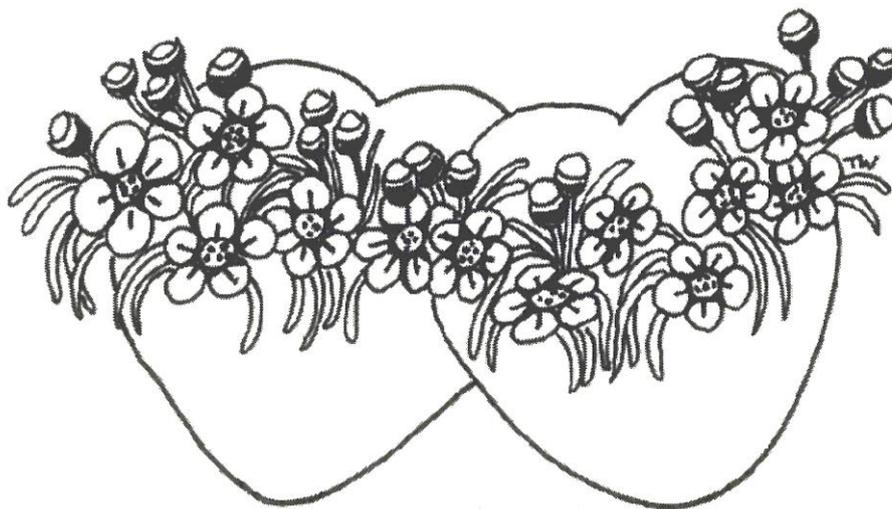
That said, this talk of the Holy Spirit can seem a touch abstract. What will the Holy Spirit actually do, how will we know that it is with us, guiding us? That is a difficult question to answer, it requires attention to the specific contexts of a given situation. But there are some clear indicators, and one is the peace just mentioned. Trouble and confusion come. In these very discourses Jesus says as much; 'in the world you will have trouble'. However, in the same verse Jesus also states while referring to the wider discourse, 'I have told you this so that you might have peace in me ... take courage, I have conquered the world' (Jn 16:33). Jesus has offered us peace, a peace that is not dependent on worldly circumstance. Thus, one sign of the Spirit being operative is peace that is not worldly. It is peace that is truthful and just. When trouble abounds, it does not succumb to worldly tendency which is to find peace through tribalism, distrustfulness of the other and deceit.

This then links to another feature of the Spirit and is drawn from last week's reading. Last week we heard of how Christ is going away, but his presence will remain in the love of one for another that is built and modelled on the love of Christ. As we love one another as Christ loved us, we manifest Christ. Christ loves with the love of God the Father, so too, our love needs to be drawn from our Lord God and the breath of

God, the Holy Spirit. We love each other by praying with, reflecting on, receiving, and actualising the Holy Spirit.

Finally, drawing on these two dimensions, peace and love, the Spirit will be draw us into community. In the First Reading we see the setting of an early Church that is having to deal with specific dilemma of the day. Many Christians were insisting that Gentile converts need to comply with certain Mosaic laws that Jewish converts have continued to hold to. As the text puts it, it is 'no small issue'. The living community of Christ is facing one of many moments where they are facing trouble, peace is disturbed and how to actualise the love called for by Christ appears difficult. Importantly, the key feature of how the young Church navigates the issue is together. They gather as a community, they listen to each other and, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, apply the teachings of Jesus to their dilemma. Trouble and difficulty can also be opportunity for divisions and conflict. The Spirit of God is one that holds people together and we do well to draw on it as a Church family and in our smaller communities too.

Today we are reminded that Jesus is not with us as he was with his first followers, however, Jesus is with us in the Spirit. The Spirit will keep God's peace and love close to us, allowing us to conquer fear, live with each other in peace and navigate the troubled world we live in.



*Do not let your hearts
be troubled or afraid.*

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us everything, so we bring in prayer all our needs.

Petitions

We pray for the Church in Australia on the interweaving journey of Plenary Council and synod. Like the apostles and elders, may we sincerely discern God's will, honestly confess to past mistakes, proclaim the Gospel without burden and speak the truth with love.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for peace in our world. May the God of all nations shed light on world leaders, so they are moved by a spirit of cooperation to seek wise, just and peaceful solutions to all disputes.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our Common Home. In this *Laudato si'* Week, may we heed the urgings of Pope Francis to walk the path of renewal and heal our relationships with the Creator, with our neighbours and with the Earth itself.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all who continue to cry out for climate justice. May they stir those of us in developed countries to make changes in our lifestyle and to take urgent and effective actions to protect our planet from further harm.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for persons who are facing hardship due to the pandemic. May they receive the financial support and caring services they need as well as comfort from true neighbours. May our community never tire of looking out for the needs of our sisters and brothers.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for children, especially those who endure neglect, abuse, exploitation or lack of opportunity. May we be attentive to the real needs of children and be proactive in ensuring they have the health-promoting and caring supports that promote growth and well-being.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

God of all nations, your rule is just and wise. Hear these intercessions and grant them according to your will. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

A new commandment. Unknown/ L Bartlett. 318
All the earth, proclaim the Lord. L Deiss. 534
All the ends of the earth. B Dufford SJ. 420
Christ is alive, with joy we sing. P Stotter/ M Vulpius. 365
Christians, let us love one another. A Nigro SJ and M Foltz SNJM/ French Melody.
206
Church of God. P Stotter/ M Daly 480
Come down, O love divine. R F Littledale/R V Williams. 375
Forth in the peace of Christ we go. J Quinn SJ. 495
I have loved you. M Joncas. 402
Love divine, all loves excelling. C Wesley/ R Prichard. 463
Love is his word. L Connaughton/ A Milner. 462
Make me a channel of your peace. S Temple. 490
My peace be upon you. C Willcock SJ. 518
My soul is longing for your peace. L. Deiss. 519
No greater love. M Joncas. 460
Now the green blade rises. J Crum/ French Carol. 364
One bread, one body. J Foley SJ. 193
Peace I leave with you my friends. G Norbet. 517
Take and eat. M Joncas. 198
This is my will, my one command. J Quinn/SJ/ Gregorian Chant. 465
Ubi caritas et amor/ Where true love and charity are found. Gregorian Chant. 319
Ubi caritas. Taize. 324
Unless a grain of wheat. B. Farrell. 500
Where there is charity and love. R Connolly. 323

AOV1

All the earth, proclaim the Lord. L Deiss. 184
All the ends of the earth. B Dufford SJ. 76
Come down, O love divine. R F Littledale/ R V Williams. 118
Enviatu Espiritu. B. Hurd. 95
I have loved you. M Joncas. 126
In perfect charity. R De Bruyn. 142
One bread, one body. J Foley SJ. 129
Remain in my love. C Willcock SJ. 159
Sing to the Lord. O Alsott. 46

AOV2

Make me a channel of your peace. S Temple. 126
My peace be upon you. C Willcock SJ. 96
Now the green blade rises. J Crum/ French Carol. 131

AOV4Kids

For the journey. G Holmes. 128

Sing to the Lord. N Ford. 104

The Spirit lives to set us free. D Lundy. 95

AOVNG

The peace of the Lord. Judy Bailey. 129

CWB

My soul is longing for your peace. Lucien Deiss. 751

Peace I leave with you. Gregory Norbet OSB. 785

To Christ, the prince of peace. Tr. Edward Caswall. 846

CWBII

Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions

Give thanks to God, the Father. James Quinn SJ. 492

My peace be upon you for ever, The Grail (England)/Christopher Willcock SJ. 558

Peace with the Father. James Quinn SJ. 591

Additional selections by Chris deSilva

My soul is longing for your peace. Lucien Deiss, CSSp. 559

No greater love. Michael Joncas. 622

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 66: *O God, let all the nations praise you!/Alleluia.*

Psalm 66: J. Robert Carroll/Joseph Gelineau SJ. CWB 310 (stanzas 1, 2, 3)

Psalm 67 (66): Jenny O'Brien. JOBC pg. 48

O God, let all the nations praise you! Tony Alonso. LPC pg. 67

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Easter alleluia (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

Sing out with joy (FWS) *Based on Ps 66* [Gathering, Gifts]

Peace for all time (TCS) [Gifts, Communion, Recessional]