

Jesus Will not leave us orphans.

Year A - 6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17, Ps 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20, 1 Pt 3:15-18, Jn 14:15-21



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“I will give you another advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth.” Reflecting on this I considered what Jewish tradition has given us in the Torah; the first five books of our bible. Those writings tell humanity, more than anything else, that our God is knowable. Imagine, knowing the creator of heaven, earth, and the universe within our life experience. The Jewish people share their experience and conversation with God. These stories are part of our Word. What a precious gift. It is hard to reconcile, that today, despite this contribution, their culture and synagogues are attacked.

My 70 some years have confirmed for me that indeed God is knowable. Serving Mass in the second grade, I saw Monsignor unknowingly brush the large host from the paten to the floor. In the Pre-Vatican II church I imagined you could be struck down for interrupting the priest during the consecration. There was no training for this! Besides that, there were two pews of nuns behind me watching my every move. And yet, I gathered myself and stood next to Monsignor so that he did not step on this Eucharistic bread. He soon took notice and returned the Eucharist to the altar. Even at age 7 or 8 there was for me a sense of the sacred. I could not articulate the idea that God was knowable but, in the innocence of a child, understood it. I can still go back to this memory and pray with it. Through all the moments of life, our God is knowable.

For a number of years, Msgr. Bill Fitzgerald was my spiritual director. Fitz loved telling the story of his father dowsing for water. As Fitz told the story, no one in the county would drill a well until Fitz’s father walked the ground with a forked peach branch marking the place to dig. Apparently, he never missed. Now there are two possibilities: 1) there was an abundance of water *or* 2) there truly was some skill involved.

Regardless, Fitz finished the story smiling at the memory. We sat in silence enjoying the moment when I asked, “Well Fitz, isn’t that what you do in spiritual direction? Looking for the living waters in someone’s life?” Recognizing a new connection to his father, Fitz again smiled and said, “Well, yes. Yes it is.”

Msgr. Fitzgerald believed in spiritual direction because he was convinced that not only is God knowable, but that God desires to reveal his presence in the fabric of life. When we feel God's closeness it is a time of consolation. When God seems distant it can be a time of desolation, a desert experience. With age comes wisdom and the knowledge of where we have found God. The desert experiences become fewer, and the time of consolation becomes an ongoing prayer and dialogue. We learn what to value in our life.

Every man, woman, and child of every culture and religious notion are called by God to something more. In today's Gospel, Jesus asks that we follow his commandments. The greatest of these is to love God and neighbor. It seems that is what God asks; grow in your love of each other and in doing so, draw closer to me.

In this 6th Sunday of Easter, I find my prayer still caught up in Holy Thursday and Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. Jesus admonishes Simon-Peter's objection to washing his feet saying, "If you do not allow me to do this you will have no inheritance with me." This was a sharp reminder that we are to be servants by addressing the needs of those around us. This was their last meal and most important lesson. In caring for each other we enter into the heart of Christ who is in the Father. Our God is indeed knowable.

We often speak of faith as our personal belief in God. Our faith must grow to include the belief that God has called each of us. Despite cultural and religious differences, we are all called to service and love of one another. Through our service and prayer, we recognize the Spirit of Truth that Jesus speaks of. It is within the inner room of prayer that we find the Advocate and mentor who teaches us to live to the fullest by being servants for all.

There is awe and wonder to be found when looking at the universe and understanding the whole of creation as a sacred movement toward something more. Our God is knowable, and through our life experience, each of us are called in a unique way.

Astronomers, using the James Webb telescope, believe that they have witnessed an earth like planet being drawn into a black hole. It is a bit of stellar housekeeping that is a reflection of life, death and resurrection. The question remains as to where this matter and energy winds up. A parallel universe perhaps? As science seeks to penetrate the mystery, one cannot help but appreciate the complexity and the God who set all in motion.

Our household has grown with the addition of a Welsh Springer Spaniel puppy. We brought Molly home at 4 months of age on a very windy day. As she explored the backyard, leftover autumn leaves were blown about. Being a bird dog, she would run and leap, catching a leaf and then falling into a ball of puppy fur. With joy, Molly would get up and do it again and again. She is part of our beautiful creation and that makes me smile.

Our Easter celebration invites us into the mystery of life, death, and resurrection. Contemplating the universe or a puppy at play, our God is revealed.

Today, we gather as community for Word and Eucharist. We celebrate the Advocate in our lives and in the lives of those around us. *Jesus will not leave us orphans.* We are to be mentors of his love. No more so than within family. And so, we celebrate this weekend all mothers, who by their gentleness and reverence, open our hearts to the living waters within.

In this Eucharist may we hear the Advocate's whisper, 'Receive and know me now so that you may recognize me in all the moments of your life.'

References

All scripture quotations are taken from. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

I welcome your questions and comments. My email is fsila@sttomskazoo.org. (n.d.).

Humor from the Inner Room

My prayer of late has been from John 21:18. “Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” As I await shoulder replacement surgery, I cannot help but wonder if the reference, ‘lead you to where you do not want to go’ includes rehab.