

Homily for the 6th Sunday of Easter [C] (25- of May-2025)

Readings :- Acts 15:1-2, 22-29; Rv 21:10-14, 22-23; Jn 14:23-29

My dear brothers and Sisters in Christ;

Today's readings show us the effects of the abiding presence of God in His Church and of His indwelling in each one of us.

“The most unpromising boy in my class” A schoolmaster in France was discouraged with one of his students. He wrote in his roll book concerning this student: *“He is the smallest, the meekest, the most unpromising boy in my class.”* Half a century later, an election was held in France to select the greatest Frenchman. By popular vote, that meekest, smallest, most unpromising boy was chosen. His name was Louis Pasteur, the founder of modern medicine. When he was seventy-three, a national holiday was declared in his honour. He was too weak to attend the ceremony in Paris, so he sent a message to be read by his son. The message read: *“The future belongs not to the conquerors but to the saviours of the world”* [Edward Chinn, *Wonder of Words* (Lima, Ohio: C.S.S. Publishing Co., Inc., 1987), p. 18.] — Louis Pasteur was driven by a great purpose. Your name and my name may never be household words as is Pasteur's, but we, too, can be driven by a great purpose. Christ can give us that purpose. But there is one thing more Christ gives us. He gives us the presence of the Holy Spirit, as promised in today's Gospel. A healthy sense of identity and a driving purpose are not enough in themselves. One thing more is needed. It is the in-dwelling Spirit of the living God.

Important lessons from the readings of the Day:- The first reading, taken from the Acts of the Apostles, tells us how the Holy Spirit, indwelling in the Church, helped the apostles to solve a major doctrinal problem about the Gentiles becoming Christians, which shook the very foundation of the early Church. The Responsorial Psalm (Ps 67) prays that all the nations on the earth may recognize their God and praise Him. The second reading, taken from the Book of Revelation, describes the Church as the Heavenly Jerusalem which replaces the holy presence of God in the *Holy of Holies* in the Temple in Jerusalem. This New Jerusalem is a city united in love, with the victorious Jesus residing in it and in each of its members. The Gospel passage reminds us that the Holy Spirit, abiding within us, is our Teacher, our Advocate, and the Source of our peace and joy. The passage offers a vision

of hope as well. Jesus promises his followers that the Holy Spirit will come and instruct them in everything they need to know.

Important messages for personal reflection and life: 1) Let us be aware of the abiding presence of God within us: We live in the New Covenant of Jesus, daily facing uncertainty, conflict, and temptations. It is the abiding presence of God within us that enables us to face the future with undying hope and true Christian courage. The Holy Spirit, Whom the risen Lord asked His Father to send upon His Church, prompts us to turn to His Holy Scriptures for support and encouragement, enables us to learn the Divine truths, and grants us His peace at all times. However, to be able to receive these gifts, it is necessary for us to spend a little time each day in personal prayer, talking to God and listening to Him. We must deepen our relationship with Jesus, learn to get in touch with him, and sincerely love him. When we listen to the Holy Spirit, we will know His plan for our life and His solutions to whatever problems we face. We will be able to love our fellow human beings, and there will be a core of peace within us. The Holy Spirit teaches us through the Scriptures and preaching during the Holy Mass. Jesus loves us and comes to us in Communion. When the Mass is ended, we go forth in the peace of Christ – and all of this takes place successfully under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2) We need to have the conviction that we are not alone: One of the great social and ethical problems of our time is isolation. Today approximately 25% of all adults live alone. Spouses, parents, and children often live as virtual strangers to one another. This is unfortunate because we never need to be alone. Jesus shares his joy with us and replaces the burden of our guilt with the freedom of forgiveness. He takes our grief and turns it into joy. So, we need only allow Jesus into our lives to be rid of this loneliness. Oneness with Jesus is the greatest gift we can give our children, our friends, or those who see no purpose in life. We can help to bring people into unity with Jesus, a unity that will change their lives. As we celebrate this Eucharistic meal, our Mass, let us celebrate in a special way the price Jesus paid for our redemption. May this Eucharistic celebration empower us to lead a true Life of the Spirit!

A question on dissension answered: The early Church seems to be embroiled in dissension less than one decade after the Resurrection of Jesus. Can the Holy Spirit really be at work in those circumstances? Perhaps the question could be rephrased this way: *“Is there a place for both controversy and peace in our Church?”* There are a lot of ways to nuance the meanings of “*dissension*” and “*debate*,” but the underlying thrust is the same: disagreement over a matter of importance, at least to the parties engaged in

the debate. The year was only about 49 or 50 AD when this occurred, which shows that lively arguments were arising whenever “*changes*” occurred that would alter or even threaten to modify “*established*” rituals and practices. So, YES, there IS a place for controversy and peace in our Church — a resounding “YES!” The Church grew and still grows in understanding of its Faith through lively discussions and debates among qualified theologians. Those discussions have been going on ever since the vision of St. Peter (Acts 10) which led to the baptism of the first Gentiles (Cornelius’ household), around 43 AD. It is important to recognize the wording of the Apostles’ decision regarding the waiver of the former discipline of circumcision: “*For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit AND to us to lay upon you no greater burden than...necessary things...*” (Acts 15:28). Clearly, the dietary laws, variations in certain rituals, and similar disciplines were deemed eligible for change as circumstances warranted. Every suggestion of making a change produces healthy, sometimes heated, discussions. Closure is then brought to the discussion at some point in time, when the Apostles (or their successors, the united Bishops) reach a decision. Cultural conditioning plays a large part in some decisions (e.g., Paul insisting that women had to wear head coverings in Church), as it does today; these are also identified as *matters of “discipline.”* (Fr. Robert F. McNamara).

Gospel exegesis: John (Chapter 14) continues to recount Jesus’ farewell discourse after the Last Supper. Today’s Gospel passage explains the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the human soul, and the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

1) The abiding presence of God in the human soul: The promise of God’s abiding presence must have been of great comfort to John’s community who knew that the Temple in Jerusalem — the symbol of God’s presence with His people — had been destroyed by the Roman army. In today’s Gospel passage, Jesus tells us that the one thing in life which we can always trust is God’s presence. God inhabits our hearts so deeply and intimately that we become the visible dwelling place of God. His living and life-affirming Presence is always with us, yet “hidden” in the very things we so often take for granted. Thus, we are invited to look for and encounter — “God-with-us,” yet “hidden” — in the person sitting next to us, in the words we speak, and in the songs we sing at worship.

2) Condition for the indwelling of the Holy Trinity: Jesus teaches us the condition for this indwelling of the Holy Trinity, namely, we have to show our love of God by keeping his word. And this keeping of his word will be facilitated by the Holy Spirit, God’s Holy Breath.

3) The role of the Holy Spirit is twofold: a) to “teach” the disciples and b) to “remind” them of what Jesus has already taught them” (v. 26). *“At work since creation, having previously ‘spoken through the prophets,’ the Spirit will now be with and in the disciples, to teach them and guide them ‘into all the truth’”* (CCC #243). Jesus affirms that even though He will no longer be visibly with them, he will continue to be present among them through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Truth will continue teaching them and helping them to understand and to build on what Jesus has already taught them. The Advocate will bring no new revelation because God has already revealed Himself in Jesus. But the Advocate will deepen their understanding of the revelation given by Jesus.

4) Jesus gives his followers four gifts: First, he gives them his love, which will enable them to keep his word. Next, he gives them the Holy Spirit, Who will teach them everything they need to know. The Holy Spirit is the abiding Love of God available to us, enabling us to accept the friendship of Jesus, while imitating him, and obeying his commands as their Master. Third, he gives them his peace to strengthen them against fear in the face of trouble. Here “peace” is not just the absence of conflict, but also the far wider concept of *shalom*, the total well-being of the person and community. The promise of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, will bring a peace that will quell their fears of the unfolding darkness ahead. *“In Johannine language, peace, truth, light, life and joy are figurative terms reflecting different facets of the great gift that Jesus has brought from God to the world. ‘Peace is my gift to you,’ is another way of saying, ‘I give them eternal life’”* (Jn 10:28; Raymond E. Brown). The Holy Spirit is available as Comforter and Guide to those who believe in Jesus and follow in his way. The One God — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – IS pure Love. This Love, the Triune God, comes and lives in us, takes up residence in us and lives in our soul. When God’s love lives in us, and we live in Him, there is much more peace in our hearts, our families, our Churches, our offices, our workplaces, our schools, and, so, our world. Fourth, Jesus rewards them with the assurance of his second coming.

JOKE SOF THE WEEK:-1) Here is an Irish lyric: “Paddy Murphy went to Mass, never missed a Sunday. But Paddy Murphy went to hell, for what he did on Monday.”

02) Peace and Relaxation: Did you know that.....If you can start the day without caffeine; if you can get going without pep pills; if you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains; if you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles; if you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it; if you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time; if you can take criticism without resentment; if you can ignore a friend’s limited education and never correct him; if you can resist

treating a rich friend better than a poor friend; if you can conquer tension without medical help; if you can relax without liquor; if you can sleep without the aid of drugs; ...then you are probably the family dog!

Additional anecdotes:-01) Two loves in our lives: Jimmy Carter, in his book, *Sources of Strength*, tells about interviewing Eloy Cruz, an admirable Cuban pastor, who had tremendous rapport with poor immigrants from Puerto Rico. “*What is the secret to your success?*” asked Carter. — Pastor Cruz replied, “*Señor Jimmy, we need to have only two loves for our lives, love for God and love for the person who happens to be in front of us at any time.*”

02) “You were walking with Mary Susanna Brown, a child of God”: Retired Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, (the eldest son of Boston physician, poet, and polymath, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes), was walking down a street one day. A little girl joined him. When the girl started to turn back home, the famed jurist said, “*When your mother asks you where you’ve been, tell her you’ve been walking with Oliver Wendell Holmes,*” to which the little girl replied confidently, “*And when your folks ask you where you’ve been, tell them you were walking with Mary Susanna Brown, a child of God.*” — There’s a little girl with a healthy sense of who she is! Psychologists tell us that a healthy sense of identity is one of the most valuable gifts we can give our children: we are all God’s children and our God is an indwelling God. First, however, we need that gift ourselves. And if we did not receive it from our parents, we will need to look to God.

03) “Were we shot down?” A commercial airline pilot on one occasion made a particularly bad landing. The wheels of the big jet hit the runway with a jarring thud. Afterward, the airline had a policy, which required that the pilot stand at the door while the passengers exited. He was to give each of them a smile and say, “*Thanks for flying with us today.*” In light of his bad landing, he had a hard time looking the passengers in the eye, thinking that someone would have a smart comment, but no one seemed annoyed. Finally, everyone had gotten off except for one little old lady walking with a cane. She approached the pilot and asked, “*Sonny, mind if I ask you a question?*” “*Why, no, Ma’am, what is it?*” said the pilot bravely. “*Did we land,*” she asked, “*or were we shot down?*” — Maybe you’ve had days like that, days when it felt like you were shot down. Even worse, maybe things are going quite well for you, really. Your friends and your family tell you how fortunate you are. But you don’t feel fortunate. In fact, your life is somewhat tortured by a nagging fear that you cannot even define. It is at those moments that God wants us to turn to Him. He is our Peace, always.