

Sixth Sunday of Easter May 17, 2020



Introduction

Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

You may want to have a small bowl of water available to remind you of your baptism!

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are raised with him to new life.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God,
for in the beginning you created us in your image
and planted us in a well-watered garden.
In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched,
and you gave us water from the rock.
When we did not know the way,
you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters.
At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side,
and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.
We praise you for your salvation through water,
and for all water everywhere.
Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love.
Satisfy the thirsty, and give us the life only you can give.
To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn ELW #666/LBW #385

What Wondrous Love is This

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Psalm: Psalm 66:8-20

Read the text [here](#).

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22

The author of 1 Peter encourages Christians to remain faithful even in the face of defamation and persecution. In baptism we are made clean to act in accordance with what is right.

Read the text [here](#).

Gospel: John 14:15-21

In final words to his disciples on the night of his arrest, Jesus encourages obedience to his commandments and speaks of the Spirit, who will be with them forever.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

Reflection on the Text

Here on the Sixth Sunday of Easter, we begin leaning into Pentecost as Jesus tells us about the coming Holy Spirit. Not that the disciples understand, yet, but the Gospel text for today is where Jesus begins to tell them what will happen. Last Sunday, we heard Jesus tell the disciples about the place he was going to prepare for them. Today, Jesus begins telling them about the Advocate (the *paraclete* in Greek) – the comforter, helper, counselor in some translations. This Advocate, the Holy Spirit, will come to be with the disciples, and with us, and will be the one to intercede for us.

Paul writes about this in Romans 8:26-27 *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too*

deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Today more than ever, we need to know that the Holy Spirit is there to intercede for us in our weakness – for those days when we do not know how to pray. Open up? Or stay home and be safe? Open up so we can do as we want? Or stay home so that others might be safe? We may not know how to pray during these days, but the Spirit does, and does so when we just don't have the words.

Jesus is also reminding the disciples that they will never be alone, which is Good News for us also. Many of us may feel very alone these days – we might go to the grocery store, or run some other essential errand, but other than that, we are home alone – or so we think. Jesus reminds us that we are never alone. The Father sent Jesus, and now Jesus is sending the Holy Spirit to be with us, a constant reminder of Jesus, and of the love of God that resides in us.

More importantly, Jesus also reminds us that we receive the Holy Spirit because of our faith. The world cannot receive this because they do not believe, and because we believe, we also are to keep the commandments of Jesus – to love God and to love one another. Those of us who love Jesus must also love others – even if it means staying home, wearing a mask when we are out, donating food, and other things that we are called to do for the sake of others. If we love Jesus, we also must love one another, even if it means giving up things we want – like haircuts and meals in a restaurant. Loving others is not easy, but Jesus loves us anyway. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

Jesus Loves Me

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Nicene Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church:

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation

**he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Abiding God, you have revealed yourself to us in the form of your Son, Jesus Christ. Embolden your church, as your followers, to reveal your love to everyone in our speaking and in our living. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are the creator of heaven and earth. Revitalize the health of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs, glaciers, and other bodies of water that give life to your creatures (*local bodies of water may be named*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You call all people of the world your children. Judge the nations justly, show mercy to the oppressed, and speak truth to power through your prophets. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. You come near to us when we are lost, and you hear our distress. We pray for those who suffer in any way (*especially those we name now or silently in our hearts*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your commands are good and merciful. Give us courage to take hold of our baptismal promises to work for justice, advocate for the voiceless, and free the oppressed and imprisoned in body, mind, or spirit. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You remain with us always, O God, and your kingdom has no end. We remember the saints who have gone before us (*especially*). Unite us forever in your final victory over death. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn ELW # 631/LBW #315

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ray Sipe.