

Homily of Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year A, 2026

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Psalm 66:1-20; 1 Peter 3:15-18; John 14:15-21

This Sunday's readings change the Eastertide from low to high as the readings draw our attention to the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. In a way, the readings begin to prepare us for Pentecost Sunday. This Thursday is the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord.

First reading: "Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:14-17). Signs of the fruit of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22).

Second Reading: "For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18). Life in the Spirit is life guided by the Holy Spirit. If we put to death works of the flesh, we will live life in the Spirit. "The works of the flesh are... immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like" (Galatians 5:20-21).

Gospel: "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you ... because I live and you will live" (John 14:18-19). Orphans can be unprotected and vulnerable to danger. Jesus assures us that he will not leave us unprotected and vulnerable to danger. Jesus promises, "I will give you an Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth" (John 14:16-17). The Holy Spirit is our spiritual attorney who leads us, guides us, directs us, and intercedes for us. The Holy Spirit, our Advocate, seals us from "the accuser of the brethren, day and night." The accuser of the brethren is a title for Satan in Revelation 12:10.

In the first reading, Philip proclaimed the word of God in Samaria. "With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip, ... unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed or crippled people were cured. There was great joy in that city." We see that because the people, with one accord, paid attention to God's word proclaimed by Philip, demons were driven away, and many sick people were cured. In the same way, if we are of one accord and if we pay attention to God's word, we will have the same experience. God will do many great things among us. But if we are not of one accord and do not pay attention to God's word, nothing much happens. In Mark 6:5-6, Jesus was unable to perform many miracles because of the people's lack of faith.

Without the spiritual disposition of the people, the miracles that took place when Philip preached would not have taken place. Many times, what is received is received according to the disposition of the receiver. That is why St. Peter cautions us in the second reading, "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts" (1 Peter 3:15), meaning, in your heart, give Christ the first place.

Jesus says, "...because I live and you will live. ... Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him" (John 14:19-21). We pray that Jesus reveals and manifests his power in us and among us through many answered prayers. In the name of Jesus, let there be revelations and manifestations of signs and miracles in us and among us. Pray and mention areas in your life where you need Jesus' revelations and manifestations.

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.

Because He lives, all fear is gone.

*Because I know He holds the future,
and life is worth a living just because He lives.*

(song by Gloria and William Gaither)

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