

6th Sunday of Easter.

John 14:15-21.

Hymns: 645, 556 Vs 5-10, 655, 490, 625, 816.

Introit: Psalm 66:8-20

P Bless our God, you peoples, and cause the sound of His praise to be heard!

C He is keeping our souls among the living, and has not allowed our feet to slide.

P For You have tested us, O God. You have refined us as silver is refined.

C You have brought us into the net. You have laid hardship on our backs.

P You have let men ride over our heads. We have gone through fire and through water.

C Nevertheless. You have brought us out to abundance.

P I shall go into Your temple with burnt offerings. I shall fulfil to You my vows,

C which my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble.

P I shall sacrifice fat animals to You with the sacrificial smoke of rams.

C I shall prepare bulls and goats.

P Come and listen, all you who fear God, that I may declare what He has done for my soul!

C I cried to Him with my mouth, and my tongue has given high praise.

P If I had been aware of injustice in my heart, the Lord would not have listened,

C but God has certainly heard me. He has paid attention to the sound of my prayer.

All Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, or turned His mercy away from me!

Collect: O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

1st Reading Acts 17:16-31

Epistle: 1st Peter 3:13-22

Gospel John 14:15-21

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon this morning is written in the book of John 14:15-21, which was our Gospel reading before

15 “If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments. 16 I shall also ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. 17 He is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see or know Him. You know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you. 18 I shall not leave you as orphans. I am coming back to you.

19 “Only a little while longer and the world will not see Me any more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I am in My Father, that you are in Me, and that I am in you.

21 “The person who has My Commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The person who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I shall love him and show Myself to him.”

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your word is truth. **Amen.**

Dear friends in Christ,

Peace be with you.

Today's Gospel follows right after last week's Gospel. Jesus and His disciples are still in the upper room. In

a few hours, they will leave the upper room and go to Gethsemane. There soldiers will arrest Jesus and within the next 24 hours, Jesus will suffer, die, and be buried in a borrowed tomb.

In the mean time, Jesus taught. Five chapters of the Gospel of John deal with the teachings that began in the upper room and continued until the soldiers arrested Jesus. Jesus knew that the events of the next few days would change everything forever. Although the disciples didn't understand at the time, the Holy Spirit would bring these words back to their memory later. The Holy Spirit would use these words to prepare the disciples for the life they would lead after Jesus rose from the dead.

Even though His next 24 hours held intense suffering and death, as I said last week, Jesus was already looking past those events. Today's gospel tells us that He taught about His ascension, the Holy Spirit's presence with His church, and the life that His disciples would lead down through the centuries. He also spoke of the world's rejection of both Him and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus knew what waited for Him in Gethsemane. Jesus knew the disciples wouldn't be able to get through the next few days alone. The despair that drove Judas to hang himself would attack them all. Jesus also knew that although they didn't understand it at the time, they needed to hear that they weren't alone. So Jesus told them about another helper. He said, **"I shall also ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, "helper," to be with you for ever. He is the Spirit of Truth. "**

The word **Advocate**, is accurately translated from the Greek word Paraclete, and could just as easily be translated as intercessor, or comforter. A Paraclete is a helper who helps the helpless - a helper who is called to be with us.

Jesus said He would ask the father to call this Advocate and send Him to us, but this isn't the first Advocate that God the Father has sent. Jesus said that this was another Advocate. Jesus Himself is the first Advocate that the Father sent. He is the Advocate who came to save us from our sins by becoming a servant - a servant who sacrificed Himself on a cross. Jesus knew He had to do this work alone and would not be with His disciples during His suffering and death. As Jesus was about to fulfill His calling as the first Advocate, He asked the Father to send another to watch over His disciples.

Jesus called this other Paraclete the **Spirit of Truth**. In other words, the Holy Spirit. Here we learn that that the Holy Spirit watches over and guards Jesus' disciples, not just those disciples back then, but He continues His watch over Jesus' disciples even today. Jesus didn't say, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, to be with you for a little while," but **"I shall also ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, "helper," to be with you for ever.** The Holy Spirit - the eternal Advocate - is with us even today as we gather in this place and as we go about our business in this world.

Not everyone is excited about this Advocate. Jesus said, **"He is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see or know Him."** By nature, all people are born into this world as heathens. Even before we are born, we are all enemies of God. We have no desire to know God. As long as we are part of the sinful world, we neither hear nor see this **Advocate**. It's as if He doesn't even exist.

Jesus' disciples are the exact opposite of the world. Jesus said, **"You know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you."** Here we learn that the Eternal Advocate is with us and in us. He is forever a part of us to guide, help, teach, and bless us.

What's different about Christ's disciples? Even though we are now Christ's disciples, we were born as disciples of the World and could not receive the Spirit of Truth. How did we change? What happened to us? How is it that the other Advocate now dwells with us and in us?

The disciples in today's Gospel heard the Word of God from the very mouth of God - the mouth of Jesus Christ. He is the one who planted the Holy Spirit in their hearts. The Holy Spirit used the Word of God from the mouth of Jesus to bring them to faith. Their contact with the Holy Spirit came through Jesus - in His visible presence.

Our contact with the Holy Spirit also comes through Jesus - as He comes to us in Word and Sacrament. The Holy Spirit continues to use the Word of God as we hear it and as God combines it with the water of Baptism and the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. So we see that God the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to plant faith - a faith that trusts in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. So we see that God the Son and God the Holy Spirit always work together. As Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, "**Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**" [Romans 10:17.]

We can see these two Advocates work together in the life of Christ. The Son of God became human as He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit even took part in His baptism, **When Jesus had been baptised, He immediately came up from the water. At that moment the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming on Him.** [Matthew 3:16.] The Holy Spirit even brought Simeon and Anna to the infant Jesus in the Temple.

The first Advocate, Jesus Christ Himself, purchased and won us from sin, death, and the power of the devil with His holy precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. He gives us the promise of life forever in heaven with His resurrection from the dead. The other Advocate, the Holy Spirit, offers this forgiveness, life, and salvation to us through the Gospel. It's this other Advocate who gives us the faith that we need to believe and receive the gifts that the first Advocate won for us. As these two Advocates work together, they transform us from disciples of the world into disciples of Jesus Christ.

When the disciples of the world saw Jesus die on the cross, they celebrated. They thought, "That is the end for that troublemaker," and they saw Him no more. We who believe in Jesus Christ know better. As Jesus said in today's Gospel, "**I shall not leave you as orphans. I am coming back to you**" and "**Only a little while longer and the world will not see Me any more, but you will see Me.**"

The world can no longer see Jesus because it's spiritually blind. We who have the other Advocate - the Holy Spirit - know the real presence of Jesus not only in the sacraments, but also in the rest of His Divine Service as well as in our day-to-day lives. We are not spiritual orphans, but Jesus is always with us.

Today's Gospel tells us of the blessings we receive from the Other Advocate - the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit offers to us the blessings Jesus bought for us with His suffering, death, and resurrection. The Holy Spirit offers forgiveness, life, and salvation to us through faith in Jesus Christ. Through this faith God adopts us into His family. We become brothers and sisters of Christ and children of our Heavenly Father. God is with us in this life and, when this life is over, He will take us to be with Him in heaven forever. Amen

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

3rd Hymn: 655,

Prayer of the Church 6th Sunday of Easter 2017

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

Brief silence

P For the Church, that the Lord would bless and protect His people in a world where so many worship false gods, known and unknown; and that He would give His saints a clear and bold proclamation of Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the government and those who protect us, that they may be strengthened and upheld in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the lonely, the destitute and the homeless, that the Lord who preserved eight souls in the ark would grant them companionship, food and shelter; and that we as His people might be His hands and feet in love for others, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For all who are in need of relief [*including* _____], that the Lord who gives mankind life and breath and everything would provide healing and restoration according to His gracious will, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For all who receive Holy Communion today, that the Christ who did not leave His people as orphans would strengthen the faith of His penitent children with His very body and blood, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the saints who have gone before us and stand before the Lord in glory, let us give thanks to the Lord; and that we might remain steadfast in the faith until we, too, see Christ in glory, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P We give You thanks, almighty God, that as You gave Your Son to be our Redeemer, so You send forth Your Holy Spirit to sanctify and keep us in the faith. Continue to pour out Your Spirit upon Your Church so that, enlivened by His work in the Means of Grace, we might remain steadfast until You deliver us to heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

4th Hymn: 490,