

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

*I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate
to be with you forever,
that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive*

Dear Parishioners,

I hope you are all keeping well. Recently, the clergy have been updated on the ongoing closure of our churches. As matters presently stand, it appears that restrictions on the closure of public places of worship will continue for the moment, although there is some hope that initially there may be opening for private prayer. Meanwhile, it is good, where possible, to participate in Sunday Mass via streamed services or, if one is unable to do so, to set aside time to pray with a text of the readings and prayers of the Sunday Liturgy. Mass, of course, continues to be celebrated each day in church remembering both the needs of parishioners and all of society at this time.

As the weeks go by, we are now at the threshold of Ascension Thursday this week and the coming feast of Pentecost. The days between these two great feasts are marked by the Novena to the Holy Spirit in order that we might be focused and prepared to celebrate the gift of God's Holy Spirit to believers and to the world.

On these days following the Ascension, let us think about the person of the Holy Spirit who is the Lord the giver of life, as we profess in the Creed. We recall that Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, those who worship God worship in Spirit and truth. In today's Sunday Gospel, Our Lord speaks of the Spirit of truth who is with us and dwells within us.

The world does not know him, though he is indeed present. The world closed in on itself excludes God's Spirit, but those who believe and recognise him are 'alive'. In the Creation, God brings all living things into being, breathing his life into them. In the new creation in Jesus Christ, God shares and bestows on us his own divine life.

In today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles, there is reference to those baptised receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation which involves the laying on of hands. In this wonderful sacrament, likewise, the Holy Spirit has come to us, but we do need to pray that this sacrament, which completes our initiation into Christ Jesus, may be at work in us each and every day. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Advocate who constantly makes intercession for us. He is in us and with us.

Let us pray,

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created and You shall renew the face of the earth.

May I mention an ecumenical initiative of local Christian Churches for the days between Ascension (21st May) and Pentecost (31st May). It is called **Thy Kingdom Come** and consists of a scripture reading, reflection and hymn by local clergy and parishioners. Fr. Anthony's and our parishioner's turn is on May 28th. These can be found on YouTube using the following links:

YouTube Channel- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMuYu-V3381Gn9HgE66NYjg>

YouTube Playlist for Thy Kingdom Come-
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhsTZcn46JG5PSWLKOvx2RKDx0I_12QRn

Fr Anthony