

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - 2020

Dear brothers and sisters, today's readings - especially the Gospel - are meant to form a bridge from the Sundays of Easter, through the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, towards Pentecost. Jesus is preparing his disciples for the fact that he will be returning to the Father, but he promises: "I will not leave you orphans."

Jesus tells the disciples that he will ask the Father to send them the Holy Spirit who will their ever-present "Advocate." Jesus concludes by "explaining" that if we love him, we will be loved by the Father. Jesus will also love us and reveal himself to us. We're in the territory of mystery here, the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and there is a whole other Sunday (after Pentecost) devoted to it.

For today, I want to focus on the second reading taken from the First Letter of St. Peter where he writes:

"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." Our hope is in Jesus, risen from the dead, who intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father, but remains with us through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

We have hope because of the promise of Jesus that "whoever believes in me, even if they die, yet shall they live." We have hope because Jesus said, "And behold, I am with you always, even until the end of time." And we have hope because it is this same Jesus of whom we trust that, "even though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, you are at my side."

Soon we will begin the gradual resumption of public Masses. However, we will have to do so following very strict guidelines:

1. Attendance at Mass for the next 2 weeks will be by invitation only.
2. Only those under the age of 65 are being invited at this time.
3. If you have had Covid-19 or have been around someone who has (or has had) Covid-19, you cannot come.
4. If you are sick or live with someone who is sick, you cannot come
5. Masks must be worn during Mass (except to receive Communion).
6. Only the north doors will be used.
7. Social distancing must be maintained at all times, keeping 6 feet between persons (or family groups), outside and inside the Church.
8. Initially, the bathrooms will not be available for use.

After the first 2 weeks (starting on Sunday, June 7th), Masses will be "open" for parishioners to attend. However, because there will be limited seating in church (to maintain social distancing) you will need to make a reservation for the Mass which you would like to attend. It will be a "first come" system. Information on the process will be mailed to all parishioners.

As we move into this next phase we all need to cooperate and be patient in order to protect our parish family and our community from a Covid-19 outbreak. If this were to happen, Masses would be suspended indefinitely. I want you to be safe, and we need to keep me safe.

God bless you all!

Fr. Peter