



**SUNDAY REFLECTION**

Luke, in the Gospel and in Acts, emphasizes the promise of the Spirit, the power from on high which will empower the disciples for their mission. We will celebrate the fulfilment of the promise at Pentecost when we see the formerly timid, terrified disciples transformed into the fearless proclaimers of the good news of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and ascended in glory to the Father. The celebration of the feast provides an opportunity for us to reflect on our own courage or cowardice when it comes to witnessing to our faith in an unbelieving, uncaring and at times openly hostile society.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Jesus ascended into heaven, blessing His disciples and promising that they would soon receive the power of the Holy Spirit. We who have received that promised gift of the Spirit are now empowered to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth – to use our time and talents to spread the good news of salvation.

**READINGS PENTECOST**

**5 JUN '22**

**Acts 2:1-11:** The description of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost reminds us that the Good News of God's faithful love is a proclamation to be shared with the whole world and that all who are disciples are called to participate in that mission.

**1 Cor. 12:3-7, 12-13:** The Holy Spirit, who empowers us to recognize Jesus as Lord, is the source of both the variety of gifts and the unity in the Church.

**Rom. 8:8-17:** Paul highlights the fact that life as a Christian is a life in the Spirit. We live now as people made alive by the Spirit of God who teaches us to call God Abba, Father

**Jn. 20:19-23:** Jesus' first Easter gift is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

**Jn. 14:15-16, 23-26:** The Spirit sent by the Father will be our advocate and teacher who reminds us of all that Jesus said. Through the Spirit God will make His home in us.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBERS**

### **What's in a Number?**

There is also a significance of the number of days found throughout the Bible and Liturgy. Originally the early Church celebrated the fifty (50) days of Easter to Pentecost as a whole. It wasn't until the fourth century that the fortieth (40th) day was marked by the feast of the Ascension, and then the fiftieth (50th) marked by Pentecost to close the Easter season. Pope Benedict XVI (as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger) elaborated on the significance of the numbers of seven (7), eight (8), forty (40) and fifty (50) in *Seek That Which is Above*, pp. 65-67 . Since the most ancient times the Church has underlined her great feasts by not restricting them to a single day but giving them a whole octave of days. The celebration resounds for a whole week and is renewed on the eighth day. The seven days, completed by the eighth, symbolize the totality of time and its transcendence into eternity. The week-long feast encompasses a basic unit of human life and thus stands as a foretaste of the freedom of eternal life, a sign of hope and peace in the midst of earthly days in toil. The Church has rendezvoused to help us experience Easter as the feast of feasts, as the basic reason for all celebration and joy, **by causing the Easter octave to last for seven times seven days. So the feast of Pentecost on the fiftieth day after Easter** is not in fact an entirely new feast; it **rounds off the circle of the seven times seven days which signify our breaking out of subservience to time into the boundless joy of the children of God, a joy uninterrupted by any striking of the hour.**

These fifty days are the answer to the forty days of tribulation and preparation by which the Church leads up to Easter. In the Old Testament numerology, forty signified the age of the world: it is an intensification of four, which recalls the four corners of the earth and hence the brokenness, the finite, incomplete and toil some nature of all earthly existence. **The forty prepare for the fifty**, the fragmentary for the complete; and the Lord's Resurrection is at the axis of both. Even through this temporal arrangement the Church has provided a profound psychological interpretation of what Easter means and of how we can and should celebrate it. For all these things, far from being liturgical games, are translations of the mystery in terms of our life; they are where the unique and once-and-for-all Event meets life in its daily newness. The Church has continued attaching the significance to the number forty (40). We see it observed during the Lenten Season. And then the General Norms of the Liturgical Year Calendar states

25. On the fortieth day after Easter the Ascension is celebrated, except in places where, not being a holyday of obligation, it has been transferred to the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

The numeric significance is interrupted when the Ascension is moved to Sunday. Pope Benedict saying "[t]he forty prepare for the fifty" can also apply to the Ascension falling on the fortieth day, with the last days in particular preparing for the fiftieth day, Pentecost. Celebrating on Sunday changes the number to forty-three (43), a prime and non-divisible number, and not particularly symbolic.

The number nine (9) which is used in novenas is also significant. Novena comes from the Latin word *novem*, meaning of course, nine. These are usually nine days of prayer before an event or

feast. The Catholic Encyclopedia explains that the number nine signifies “hopeful mourning, of yearning, of prayer.” The very first novena occurred in those days after the Ascension, waiting in prayer in the Upper Room for the Holy Spirit. The apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary were waiting for that fiftieth day. This is the model novena. Novenas have always been private devotion until the General Norms of the Liturgical Year and Calendar elevated the novena for Pentecost as liturgical:

26. The weekdays after the Ascension until the Saturday before Pentecost inclusive are a preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

This doesn’t specifically mention the number nine or novena, but The Directory of Popular Piety and the Liturgy reinforces this idea that the Pentecost Novena is already within the liturgy (and needs to be those nine days):

155. The New Testament tells us that during the period between the Ascension and Pentecost “all...joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers” (Acts 1, 14) while they awaited being “clothed with the power from on high” (Lk 24, 49). The pious exercise of the Pentecost novena, widely practised among the faithful, emerged from prayerful reflection on this salvific event.

Indeed, this novena is already present in the Missal and in the Liturgy of the Hours, especially in the second vespers of Pentecost: the biblical and eucological texts, in different ways, recall the disciples’ expectation of the Paraclete. Where possible, the Pentecost novena should consist of the solemn celebration of vespers. Where such is not possible, the novena should try to reflect the liturgical themes of the days from Ascension to the Vigil of Pentecost.

So, even if one lives in one of the 40 states which celebrate the Ascension Mass on Sunday, if we are following the Church’s liturgy, our hearts should be focused on the Ascension joy with the whole Church community beginning on Ascension Thursday. The preparation for Pentecost in the form of a novena should begin on Ascension Thursday. The liturgy continues the rejoicing of “mounting his throne” from Thursday until Saturday, and our hearts should be echoing that joy throughout those days, too.

### **Celebrating the Ascension**

Easter ranks as the highest feast of the Church. There are four solemnities that rank right behind Easter: Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, and Pentecost. The Solemnity of the Ascension can be a holyday of obligation or Sunday, which the Church in Canon Law states our duties:

**Can. 1247:** On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass.

Moreover, they are to abstain from those works and affairs which hinder the worship to be rendered to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s day, or the suitable relaxation of mind and body. At first glance, the Ascension would seem to be a sad day. Christ in his human body is leaving the world for the last time. But we need to take our cues from the liturgy. This is a joyful feast; it is the fulfillment of Christ’s salvific mission. The Ascension is the final leg of the Paschal Mystery: Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension into heaven (as mentioned in the Eucharist Prayer of the Mass). It is not until Jesus ascends and returns to His Father that His act of Redemption is completed. Our place in heaven is prepared at this feast—we will now share in Christ’s glory. That is why our hearts should sing with Psalm 47 as it repeats 3 days in a row, “*God mounts His throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.*”

## **THE SACRED MASS**

### **THE OFFERTORY**

#### **Preparation of the gifts**

While the collection is taken up, the priest prepares the altar. When all is ready, he elevates first the bread, then the wine, pronouncing a blessing over each. The blessing, which begins, "Blessed are you, Lord of all creation," echoes the blessing Jesus pronounced at the Last Supper, the blessing of the Passover meal, "Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine." It also echoes the blessing of Melchizedek in Genesis 14: 19-20. Importantly, before pronouncing the blessing over the wine, the priest mixes into it a small amount of water. He does this in continuation of the custom of Jesus' time, where wine was diluted before it was drunk, and as a symbol of the blood and water that gushed forth from Christ's side on the cross (Jn 19:34).

Next, the priest washes his hands, following St. Paul's advice in 1 Timothy 2:8, that when praying, men should lift up "holy" or "clean" hands.

Finally, with the priest, the whole congregation implores God to accept the sacrifices offered — both the priest's and our own — and, by it, bless the world.

#### **Preface and the Sanctus**

The preface of the Eucharistic Liturgy has remained virtually unchanged for the past 1800 years. In the early 200s, St. Hippolytus' account of the Mass in Rome included the dialogue between priest and people that enjoins the congregation to "Lift up your hearts to the Lord" and "Give thanks to the Lord our God." His contemporary in North Africa, St. Cyprian, records the same dialogue in his description of the liturgy, a dialogue intended to remind Christians that "wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21).

The preface continues with a short prayer. Like the opening dialogue, it focuses the congregation on the importance of what is about to take place and invites us to enter into the Mass even more completely.

Then, with the reminder that we are praying "with the angels and saints," the congregation sings the Sanctus, the "Holy, Holy, Holy," taken from Isaiah 6:2-3 and Revelation 4:8. This hymn, as we know from a letter from Pope St. Clement (martyred in A.D. 99), has been sung in the Mass since at least the first century of Christianity.

## **25 HOUR ADORATION**

As we gear up to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Stephen's and especially recognizing the tremendous amount of work that you the current members of the congregations as well as the contributions of those who have preceded us, it would seem appropriate to start off with a spiritual dimension. Something low key, but which focuses our attention on what is at the heart of this parish and of our faith. This would obviously be Jesus Christ and that enduring gift of Himself that we encounter in the Eucharist. It is here that we are nourished, strengthened, find solace, inspiration and challenge.

Therefore I have requested that the regular Eucharistic Adoration that takes place on First Friday's (This June it being the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) be extended to 25 hours and I invite and encourage that we all take a bit of time to step into the church and before the Eucharist give thanks for

what this community has achieved through the grace of God and ask His continuing guidance on this community as it moves into the future.

### **AMERICA'S WHITE TABLE**

Though no one is able to trace the history of the White POW/MIA Table back to its very beginning, it is believed to have originated by the River Rats during the Vietnam War. Once the war was over, it is believed the tradition continued state-side as a commemorative to the fallen comrades as well as the men who were still missing in action. It wasn't long before the tradition became a part of each military branch. Over the years, the "table" has evolved and there are some slight differentiations that exist between the tables set by each branch of the military. The general principle, and most of the setting, is similar.

1. The tablecloth chosen for the table is always white. White symbolizes the pure intention with which the comrades honored have served.
2. The table is small with a setting for just one person, reflecting the vulnerability of one prisoner against his enemy.
3. A single rose in a vase sits on the table symbolizing the blood that has been shed. The rose also represents the families and loved ones that have been left behind and the faith they uphold that their loved one will one day return.
4. A slice of lemon is placed on a bread plate as a reminder of their bitter fate. And the salt on this plate symbolizes the tears that have been shed by their families as they quietly wait.
5. A glass on the table is inverted which denotes their inability to be with us and toast with us this night.
6. A candle on the table represents the light in our hearts that accompanies the hope that they will one day find their way home.
7. A chair is placed at the table and remains empty, for they are not here with us.

### **Let Us All Take a Moment to Remember**

Most of us have not been deeply touched by the loss or the unknown whereabouts of a loved one who served in the military. We go about our daily rituals with little thought of those who died in combat, those still listed as missing in action or even those who may possibly still be held as prisoners of war. Our day should not be dimly overshadowed by such atrocities, however, we should never forget the sacrifices made by our military men and women and especially those (and their families) who gave the ultimate sacrifice – their life.

Make a promise to periodically remember those who have given so much in order for us to continue to enjoy the lifestyle's we often take for granted. Make it a point to review and remember through the symbolism of The White Table.

## PRAYERS

### Act of Oblation before Holy Mass

Eternal Father, we offer you the sacrifice wherein your Son Jesus offered Himself upon the Cross and which He now renews upon this altar

We adore you and render to you that honor which is your due, acknowledging your dominion over all things and our absolute dependence on you.

You are our first beginning and our last end;

we give you thanks for countless benefits received;

we ask you to forgive our sins and to offer you worthy satisfaction for the same;

Finally to implore your grace and mercy for all of us who will offer this sacrifice today, for all those who are in tribulation and distress, for all of us sinners,

for the whole world and for the souls in purgatory.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE SEVENTH WEEK OF EASTER 28 - 5 JUNE 2022

### Saturday 28 May Easter Weekday 6

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Easter Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II

1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions

5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass of the Ascension

Proper of Feast, Gloria, Creed, Preface Ascension I, Eucharistic Prayer I

### Sunday 29 May Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord

7:00 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Preface Ascension I, Eucharistic Prayer II

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Preface Ascension I, Eucharistic Prayer I

11:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Gloria, Creed, Preface Ascension I, Eucharistic Prayer I

2:00 p.m. Mass Brig

### Monday 30 May MEMORIAL DAY Office Closed

8:30 a.m. Mass Outside at altar in cemetery weather permitting  
Mass for Peace & Justice #30 A

### Tuesday 31 May F Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Feast, Gloria, Preface of Blessed Virgin Mary II,  
Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Yoshi Okamoto)

**Wednesday 1 Jun M St. Justin, Martyr**  
 6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Preface of Holy Martyrs, Eucharistic Prayer III  
 (Intention: Heather Ward RIP)  
 7:00 – 8:00 a.m. Confessions  
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Saint, Preface of Holy Martyrs, Eucharistic Prayer III  
 (Intention: Joe Raimondi Family)  
 12:00 p.m. Mass Portsmouth Naval Hospital

**Thursday 2 Jun Easter Weekday 7**  
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Ascension Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II  
 (Intention: Fr. Jim Smith RIP)  
 2:00 p.m. Meeting Capital Campaign  
 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions  
 6:30 p.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Ascension Preface II, Eucharistic Prayer II  
 (Intention: Ramon & Mercedes Cruz RIP)

**Friday 3 Jun M St. Charles Lwanga & Companions**  
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Saint, Preface of Holy Martyrs, Eucharistic Prayer III  
 (Intention: Mary & Ed Ceccolini)  
 12:00 p.m. Portsmouth Naval Hospital Mass  
 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Adoration & Confessions  
 7:00 p.m. Mass Proper of Saint, Preface of Holy Martyrs, Eucharistic Prayer III  
 (Intention: Donald Reisch RIP)

**Saturday 4 Jun Easter Weekday 7**  
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Day, Ascension Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II  
 (Intention: Lisa Carlson RIP)  
 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions  
 5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass of Pentecost  
 Proper Vigil, Gloria, Creed, Proper Preface, Eucharistic Prayer I  
 (Intention: Bill Quinn RIP)

**Sunday 5 Jun Solemnity of Pentecost**  
 7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Creed, Proper Preface, Eucharistic Prayer I  
 (Intention: Philip Zelianak RIP)  
 8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Creed, Proper Preface, Eucharistic Prayer I  
 (Intention: Parish of St. Stephen, Martyr)  
 11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Creed, Proper Preface, Eucharistic Prayer I  
 (Intention: Irene Boulais RIP)  
 2:00 p.m. Mass Brig

“The way Jesus shows you is not easy. Rather, it is like a path winding up a mountain. Do not lose heart! The steeper the road, the faster it rises towards ever wider horizons.”