



### **SUNDAY REFLECTION**

The readings in today's liturgy offer many basic teachings as well as insights for reflection. In the reading from Acts, we are reminded of the fact that the mission of Jesus and the early Christian community extends beyond the Jews to the Gentles. The Samaritans represent this expansion that will culminate at the end of Acts in the good news being proclaimed to the ends of the earth. Indeed, the message of the gospel is inclusive; baptism and the gift of the Spirit can be received by anyone who believes in the Lord. Just as Jesus in His own ministry welcomed outcasts and sinners so must we include all within the community of faith. It is as much a challenge today, as it was in the early Church, to welcome all as equals, loved by God and guided by the Spirit. However, this diversity of thought, culture, lifestyle, and perspective enriches all of us. If we reflect on this teaching, our response will be similar to that of Samaritans when they witnessed God's power at work – that of great rejoicing. Joy and thanksgiving are two of Luke's favorite virtues and they result when we truly recognize the gift of our life in the Spirit.

The reading from the First Letter of Peter teaches us that there is a cost of discipleship. Just as Jesus suffered and died so that He could be raised to new life in the Spirit, the same is true for us. To be followers of Christ in a world that does not necessarily honor faith means that we will suffer for our choices and for our commitment. However, if we recognize this reality as integral to our baptismal commitment and continue to live a good and holy life, we will offer to others reasons for the hope within us. The Second Vatican Council challenged us to give people reasons for living and reasons for hoping. Can we continue to do this in our troubled times? Do we have hope because of the life we have in the Lord?

The gospel selection from John in which Jesus speaks to His followers offers profound teachings. Jesus promises that He will not leave us orphans but will send an Advocate, the Spirit of truth to be with us. He also promises that He will return again, a hopeful thought for

the disciples. But the most startling insight we hear in the passage is that we share in the union between Jesus and the Father, share in a bond of love that offers God's life to believers. This new relationship, the abiding presence of the Lord within us, and the role of the Spirit as revealer of truth should empower us to be prophetic voices in our world. As we reflect on the dynamic of love and union with God revealed by Christ, we can be challenged to live according to the mandates of love and to witness to this reality in all our choices.

Joy, thanksgiving, hope, love, and union with God in Christ are the core of the message in today's liturgy. These should form the fabric of our lives as individuals, as communities, as Church. If they do, then we will be the prophetic voice our world needs. If suffering is the result, then we will identify more closely with Christ who calls us to follow in His steps. But always, and in all situations, we can rely on Jesus' abiding presence to strengthen us.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Those who obey the commandments, Jesus says in today's Gospel, are the ones who really love Him. Does my stewardship reveal my love for Jesus?

## **READINGS FOR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**24 MAY '20**

**Acts 8:5-8, 14-17:** The growth of the early church continues as Philip is welcomed by the Samaritans and they receive the Holy Spirit.

**1 Pt. 3:15-18:** The author proposes the example of Jesus to encourage his audience in the midst of persecution. As the Just One who died on behalf of the unjust, He made possible an entirely new relationship with God. Through His risen state He was empowered to communicate the Spirit.

**Jn. 14:15-21:** The author links the keeping of Jesus' commandments with the promise of divine presence. Indeed the Spirit will complement the work of Jesus. This Paraclete will not only be with the disciples but also within them. Hence the Paraclete means the ongoing presence of Jesus.

## **DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES**

Over the past weeks of the closing of our churches and the suspension of public Masses we have made use of a variety of devotional practices to pray together as a community of faith. Some of these we are familiar with while others perhaps not so much.

### **NOVENAS**

**What is the significance of a novena? Why nine days?**

#### **Friday after the Ascension**

*And eating together with them, [Jesus] commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard (saith he) by my mouth. (Acts of the Apostles 1:4)*

Before Christ ascended into heaven, he commanded his Apostles to remain in the city of Jerusalem for the nine days until the feast of Pentecost, and there to await the descent of the Holy Spirit. With this, our Savior instituted the practice of the Christian Novena – nine days of prayer, especially in preparation for a solemn feast or in petition for some special grace.

Christ Jesus commanded this first novena both as a period of preparation (since the feast of Pentecost was approaching) and also as an act of petition (for the Apostles, together with Mary, were pleading for the Holy Spirit to come as their Advocate).

But what is the significance of a novena? Why nine days, rather than ten or forty or three?

### **The number nine**

The number “nine” has a great symbolic richness. On the one hand, it is derived from the Trinitarian and Divine number “three” – being “three times three”. On the other hand, “nine” is a number of imperfection because it is one lacking from “ten”.

In the Scriptures, St. Jerome tells us, “the number nine is indicative of suffering and grief.” (Commentary in Ezekiel, vii.24) We recall that the good shepherd leaves the ninety-nine sheep to go after the one that was lost. Further, Abram was ninety-nine years old when circumcised and, entering into the covenant with God, received his new name of Abraham.

It is worth noting that, unlike the numbers “three” and “ten” (and “twelve”, etc.), the Jews did not have a great regard for the number “nine”. Indeed, the practice of a nine-day novena of prayers is not of Jewish origin, but finds parallel only in pagan practices.

### **The first Christian novenas**

It seems that, although the first “novena” was carried out by the Apostles (together with the Blessed Virgin Mary) in an upper-room in Jerusalem during the nine days between the Ascension and Pentecost, the Christian faithful first began to keep “novenas” not in preparation for Pentecost, but rather before Christmas.

By the seventh century, particularly in Spain and France, the faithful kept of a nine-day novena of preparation before the Solemnity of Christmas. It is clear that these nine days of prayer were symbolic of the nine months which our Savior spent in the womb of Mary his Mother.

Thus, we may well say that our Lord made a nine-month novena with Mary before coming forth from her most pure womb, and so likewise the Apostles made a nine-day novena with May before going forth to preach the Gospel throughout the whole world.

However, the general practice of novenas did not gain official approval by the Church (through the granting of indulgences) until the nineteenth century. Indeed, it is quite surprising that the practice of novenas did not gain greater popularity and official support earlier!

### **LITANY**

Litanies are prayers to our Lord, his Blessed Mother, and the saints consisting of a series of petitions and responses. Although they are traditionally used in church services, they can also be prayed in private devotions, and may be sung.

The word “litany” itself comes from the Greek word “lite,” meaning “prayer” or “supplication.” In public worship, one person recites the first part of the prayer, which is followed by a response from the congregation (such as “pray for us”).

These prayers have their roots in the pre-Christian era when Jews used this responsive pattern in public worship. The first Christian litanies probably consisted of the frequent repetition of the words *Kyrie Eleison* (Greek for “Lord have Mercy,” the same words we pray at Mass). The faithful added more and more prayers and petitions over time until there were over eighty different forms of litanies by the 17th century!

It was then, in 1601, that Pope Clement VIII officially forbade publication and public recitation of any of these other than the Litany of the Saints and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (also known as the Litany of Loreto).

Since then the Holy See has approved four additional ones for public use. These pay tribute to the Most Holy Name of Jesus, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Most Precious Blood of Jesus and St. Joseph. There are many others that can be used for private prayers, however, such as the Litany of St. Jude, the Litany of St. Michael, the Litany of St. Therese, a Litany for the Dying, and the Litany of Humility.

These prayers are rich in imagery. For example, the Blessed Virgin Mary is referred to as Mother, Virgin and Queen under various titles but also as a “spiritual vessel” “gate of heaven” and “refuge of sinners.” The Sacred Heart of Jesus is called the “Sacred Temple of God,” the burning furnace of charity,” “victim for our sins” and most importantly “salvation of all who trust in Thee.”

St. Joseph, “Spouse of the Mother of God,” is given due honor as the “Head of the Holy family,” the “Diligent protector of Christ,” and “patron of the dying” (one of the many titles of his patronage).

Whether prayed publicly or privately, these prayers give us a wonderful overview of the attributes that make our Lady, our Lord, and His Church so special.

## **WEEKDAY REFLECTIONS SIXTH WEEK OF EASTER**

### **Jesus Prepares Us**

#### *Monday of the Sixth Week of Easter*

“They will expel you from the synagogues; in fact, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God. They will do this because they have not known either the Father or me. I have told you this so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you.” (Jn. 16:2-4)

Most likely, as the disciples listened to Jesus tell them they would be expelled from the synagogues and even killed, it went in one ear and out the other. Sure, it may have disturbed them a bit, but they most likely moved on rather quickly not worrying too much about it. But this is why Jesus said, “I have told you this so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you.” And you can be certain that when the disciples were persecuted by the scribes and Pharisees, they did remember these words of Jesus.

It must have been a heavy cross for them to receive such persecution from their religious leaders. Here, the people who were supposed to point them to God, were wreaking havoc in their lives. They would have been tempted to despair and lose their faith. But Jesus anticipated this heavy trial and, for that reason, warned them that it would come.

But what’s interesting is what Jesus did not say. He did not tell them they should fight back, start a riot, form a revolution, etc. Rather, if you read the context to this statement, we see Jesus telling them that the Holy Spirit will take care of all things, will lead them and will enable them to testify to Jesus. To testify to Jesus is to be His witness. And to be a witness to Jesus is to be a martyr. Thus, Jesus prepared His disciples for their heavy cross of persecution by the religious leaders by letting them know that they would be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to give witness and testimony to Him. And once this began to take place, the disciples began to recall all that Jesus had told them.

You, too, must realize that being a Christian means persecution. We see this persecution in our world today through various terrorist attacks upon Christians. Some see it also, at times, within the “Domestic Church,” the family, when they experience ridicule and harsh treatment for trying to live out their faith. And, sadly, it’s even found within the Church itself when we see fighting, anger, disagreement and judgment.

The key is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit plays a significant role right now in our world. That role is to strengthen us in our witness to Christ and to ignore any way the evil one would attack. So if you feel the pressure of persecution in any way, realize that Jesus spoke these words not only for His first disciples, but also for you.

Reflect, today, upon any way that you experience persecution in your life. Allow it to become an opportunity for hope and trust in the Lord through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He will never leave your side if you trust in Him.

*Lord, when I feel the weight of the world or persecution, give me peace of mind and heart. Help strengthen me by the Holy Spirit that I may give joyful witness to You. Jesus, I trust in You.*

### **Come Holy Spirit!**

#### ***Tuesday of the Sixth Week of Easter***

“But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.” (Jn. 16:7)

The hearts of the Apostles were conflicted. They were filled with grief, but they were also trying to trust what Jesus said to them. Jesus told them He was ascending to His Father and that it was better for them that He go. Why? Because if He goes, He will send the Holy Spirit to them.

On a human level, it would have been quite hard for the Apostles to let go of their daily interactions with Jesus. They certainly missed seeing Him with their eyes, touching Him and hearing Him. But Jesus made it clear that even though He was leaving He would be with them always. And He would also send the Holy Spirit upon them to lead them, give them courage, and teach them all truth. They would now be His presence in the world by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We never had the privilege of seeing Jesus in the way the Apostles did. But we do have the same privilege of Him being with us always. And we have the same privilege of receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit. This is good. It is very good. But it is a good that we often miss. We may have been confirmed, but we may also still fail to let the Holy Spirit in and transform our lives.

In less than two weeks we will celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost. This is the annual celebration of the fulfillment of this promise of Jesus. On that day we commemorate the fact that the Holy Spirit has come and that we are now in the time of the Holy Spirit.

Reflect, today, and over the next couple of weeks about the Holy Spirit. Humbly admit to yourself if you need to let the Holy Spirit become more alive in your life. Trust that Jesus wants you to receive Him in His fullness. And be not afraid to let this union take place.

*Holy Spirit, please come to me. Help me to fan into flame Your presence in my life. May I receive You who was promised by Jesus in Your fullness. Holy Spirit, Divine Jesus, Merciful Father, I trust in You.*

## **The Spirit of Truth**

*Wednesday of the Sixth Week of Easter*

Jesus said to his disciples: "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth." (Jn. 16:12-12)

As we continue to get closer to the wonderful Solemnity of Pentecost, we continue to focus in on the Holy Spirit. This passage specifically points to the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of Truth." It's interesting how Jesus introduces the Holy Spirit under this title. He explains that He has much more to tell them, but they cannot bear it now. In other words, the "Truth" is too much for them to bear unless the Holy Spirit is alive within them and teaching them. This gives us two wonderful insights worth pondering.

First, if we have not truly opened our lives to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, we can be certain that we cannot bear the Truth. We cannot understand the deep truths of God and we cannot believe them unless the Holy Spirit is alive within us. That's a frightening thought in that, when the Holy Spirit is not fully immersing someone, that person is left in the dark regarding all Truth. And, sadly, they will not even realize they are in the dark!

If that does not make sense then perhaps you, too, suffer a bit from a lacking of the Spirit of Truth. Why? Because when the Spirit of Truth is alive within, you will know that you know the Truth.

Secondly, when you have fully opened your mind and heart to the Holy Spirit, you will become hungry for the Truth. The Holy Spirit will "guide you to all truth." And one of the effects of being guided into all truth is that you will be amazed with the journey. You will be in awe at the understanding of things that open up in your mind. You will be able to make sense of things in a new way. The Holy Spirit is the perfect "guide" and the journey toward the Truth is glorious.

Reflect, today, upon the Truth as it resides in the mind of the Father in Heaven. How open are you to the Truth? How fully do you embrace all that God wants to reveal to you? Open yourself more fully to the Holy Spirit and seek all that He wishes to reveal to you.

*Holy Spirit, come consume my life. Teach me and guide me into all Truth. Holy Spirit, Divine Lord, Merciful Father, I trust in You.*

(Note: The reflection below is used when the Solemnity of the Ascension is transferred to Sunday.)

## **Sorrow to Joy**

*Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter*

"Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy." (Jn. 16:20)

Grief, mourning and even weeping is a part of life. Children will often weep at the slightest difficulty, but all of us face grief and sorrow throughout life.

In this passage above, Jesus informs His Apostles that sorrow and grief will be a part of their lives. This is a very sober but realistic statement on the part of our Lord. It's an act of love, on His part, to be up front with His Apostles about the coming hardships they will face.

The good news is that Jesus follows this statement with the hopeful news that their "grief will become joy." This is the most important part of what Jesus says.

The same is true in our lives. Jesus does not promise us that our lives will be free from hardship and pain. He does not tell us that following Him means that all will be easy in life. Instead, He

wants us to know that we will follow in His footsteps if we choose to follow Him. He suffered, was mistreated and ultimately killed. And this would be tragic if He did not ultimately rise from the dead, ascend into Heaven and transform all prior grief and pain into the very means of the salvation of the world.

If we follow in His footsteps, we need to see every bit of grief in our lives as potentially a means of grace for many. If we can face the hardships of life with faith and hope, nothing will ultimately keep us down and everything will be able to be used for God's glory and will result in great joy.

Reflect, today, upon these words of Jesus. Know that He was not only speaking them to His Apostles, but also to you. Do not be scandalized or shocked when life deals you some difficulty. Do not despair when suffering is placed before you. Surrender all things to our Lord and let Him transform it into the joy that He promises in the end.

*Lord, I surrender to You all suffering in my life. My grief, hardships, sorrow and confusion I place in Your hands. I trust that You are all-powerful and desire to transform all things into a means of Your glory. Give me hope in times of despair and trust when life is hard. Jesus, I trust in You.*

(In many dioceses throughout the world, the Feast of the Ascension is transferred to this coming Sunday)

## **The Continuing Presence of Our Lord**

### ***Ascension of Our Lord***

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Mt. 28:19-20 Year A)

Jesus completes His mission on Earth and ascends into Heaven to take His seat on His glorious throne for all eternity. Or does He? The answer is yes and no. Yes, He does take His seat on His glorious throne, but no, He does not complete His mission on Earth. The Ascension is both the end and the beginning. It's a transition to the next phase in the perfect plan of the Father. And understanding the way this plan unfolds should leave us in wonder and awe.

Sure, the Apostles were probably somewhat frightened and confused. Jesus was with them, then He died, then He rose and appeared various times, and then He ascended to the Father before their eyes. But He also told them that it is good that He goes. In fact, He said that it's better that He goes. They must have been confused. Jesus also told them His Advocate would come to lead them into all Truth. So the Apostles went from joy, to fear, to relief and more joy, to confusion and sorrow, to curiosity and uncertainty.

Sound familiar? Perhaps that's the way some find their lives to be. Ups and downs, twists and turns, joys and sorrows. Each phase reveals something new, something challenging, something glorious or something sorrowful. The good news is that the Father's plan is unfolding perfectly. The part of the perfect plan we find ourselves in with this solemnity is the part where Jesus begins to direct His mission of establishing the Kingdom of God from Heaven. His throne is, in a sense, the driver's seat of our lives. From Heaven, Jesus suddenly begins to descend continuously into our lives fulfilling His mission in and through the Apostles, as well as all of us. The Ascension does not mean Jesus is gone; rather, it means Jesus is now present to each and every person who turns to Him and surrenders their life to His mission. From Heaven, Jesus is able to be present to all. He is able to live in us and invites us to live in Him. It's the

new beginning of the Church. Now all the Apostles need to do is wait for the Holy Spirit to descend.

Reflect, today, upon the abiding and intimate presence of our Lord in your life. Know that Jesus invites you to share in His mission. From His glorious throne He wants us to “preach everywhere.” He wants to invite each one of us to do our part. The part of the Father’s plan entrusted to each one of us is not entrusted to another. We all have a share in that plan. What is your part? How does Jesus direct His mission through you? Ponder this question today and know that He accompanies you as you say “Yes” to your part in the glorious unfolding of His perfect plan.

*Lord, I do find that my life is filled with many ups, downs, twists and turns. There are joys and sorrows, moments of confusion and clarity. In all things help me to continually say “Yes” to Your plan. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **Anguish Turns to Joy**

*Friday of the Sixth Week of Easter*

“When a woman is in labor, she is in anguish because her hour has arrived; but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.” (Jn. 16:21-22)

Anguish in life is common. In small ways we will experience anguish each and every day. And, from time to time, we will experience the very heavy pains of a particular anguish in our lives. Does an experience of anguish mean you are not in God’s grace? Does it mean that God has left you? Or does it mean that you are doing something wrong? Certainly not. In fact, all we have to do is look at the life of Jesus to see this is not the case. He was in constant anguish throughout His earthly life as He continually entered more deeply into the mission of His Father. Just prior to His public ministry He was in anguish for forty days in the desert. Throughout His public ministry He experienced the anguish and exhaustion of His earthly life. He experienced the criticism of others, misunderstanding, ridicule, rejection, harsh treatment, and so much more. In the end, we know His fate on the Cross.

Our Blessed Mother had the “sword of sorrow” pierce her heart. She was misunderstood and ridiculed from the beginning as a result of her mysterious pregnancy out of wedlock. She carried a perfect love of her Son and anguished over His future as He grew. She watched many love Him and others harass Him. She watched His mockery of a trial and His Crucifixion. But think of their lives now. They now reign from Heaven as the glorious Queen of All Saints and the King of the Universe. They live in glory now for eternity. Their anguish has turned to perfect joy.

Reflect, today, upon your own trials in life. The Scripture passage above reveals the promise that God makes to those who endure them with faith. If you feel as though you have been dealt an unfair hand or have been treated unfairly, you are in good company. The key is to walk through this life with grace and dignity. Do not let the trials of this life or its pains get you down. Know that as you remain faithful walking down the path God has set for you, the end result is that you will rejoice! This is simply a fact. Hold on to that hope and keep your eyes on the finish line. It’s worth it in the end.

*Lord, I surrender my anguish and burdens to You. I unite them to Your Cross and trust that You will be there in all things walking with me through my life. May I keep my eyes on the goal and rejoice in Your steadfast love. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **Speaking Clearly**

*Saturday of the Sixth Week of Easter*

“I have told you this in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures but I will tell you clearly about the Father.” (Jn. 16:25)

Why does Jesus speak in “figures of speech” rather than speaking clearly? Good question.

We see this same fact in the many parables that Jesus spoke. Most likely, when people would hear His parables they would walk away asking, “What do you think He meant by that?” So why does Jesus speak in a veiled language rather than speaking clearly and directly?

The answer has to do with us and our lack of openness to the Truth. If we were fully open to the Truth, and if we were completely ready to embrace the Truth no matter what it was, Jesus would be able to speak to us clearly and we would respond immediately. But this is so rarely the way it happens. The key to understanding this is to understand the connection between knowledge of God’s will and the willingness to immediately fulfill that will.

So often, we want Jesus to tell us His will, mull over it, consider it, and then come back with our response. But it doesn’t happen that way. Rather, if we want Jesus to speak to us clearly, we must say yes to Him even before we know what He wants. Willingness to embrace His will is a prerequisite to understanding His will.

Of course our Blessed Mother is the perfect example of this in her fiat. Prior to the angel coming to her, she continually said “Yes” to the will of God. Then, when the angel came to her and told her what would happen, she asked for clarity. And she did indeed get that clarity as a direct response to her question. “The Holy Spirit will overshadow you and the power of the Most High will come upon you...” the angel said. But the only reason the angel, as a messenger of God, spoke so clearly was because she had already shown her heart to be fully compliant with God’s plan no matter what it would be.

Reflect, today, upon how clearly you hear God speak to you. Do you want Him to be clearer to you? Do you want Him to speak to you with greater clarity? If so, work on surrendering your will over more completely to that which you do not even know. Say “Yes” to that which God wants of you tomorrow, and say “Yes” to it today. Building this habit of saying yes immediately will open the door to greater clarity in all God wants to say.

*Lord, the answer is “Yes.” I choose Your will today, tomorrow and always. I choose nothing but Your will. As I say “Yes” to You, help me to grow in greater clarity of all you ask of me. Jesus, I trust in You.*

## **PRAYERS**

**Prayers proposed by Pope Francis for recitation at the end of praying the rosary**

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who, at the foot of the cross, were united with Jesus’ suffering and persevered in your faith.

“Protectress of the Roman people.” (Here place the name of our own Diocese or Parish) you know our needs, and we know that you will provide, so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us. For He took upon Himself our suffering, and burdened Himself with our sorrows to bring us, through the cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen

“We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God.”

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes toward us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priest who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus.

Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out His all powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen

### **Ascension Prayer to Live a Full Life**

O Lord,

Your Ascension into heaven  
marks the culmination of the Paschal Mystery,  
and it contains an important teaching for us.  
May we live life as an earthly reality  
and develop our human potential to the fullest.  
May we make use of the results of science  
to achieve a better life on this planet.  
But in our best moments  
we know that there must be more  
than all of this,  
a transcending Reality.  
As Christians, we know that this Reality  
is Your loving Father  
Who awaits us with You and the Holy Spirit.  
Where You have gone,  
we ultimately will come - if we are faithful.  
*New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book*

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, right before your Ascension into heaven you told your apostles to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth upon receiving the Holy Spirit. May I be similarly inspired to spread your Gospel message in word and deed, according to your will for me. And may I do so prudently and joyfully, with your help, your guidance, and your grace! And remembering this glorious event, help me to seek what is above, Heaven, where you are seated at the right hand of God the Father!

**SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF  
24 - 31 MAY**

**Sunday 17 May Sixth Sunday of Easter**

8:30 a.m. Mass Live Streamed

9:30 a.m. – Noon Collection of food for PoP & Chesapeake Food Banks

**Monday 18 May**

8:30 a.m. Mass Live Streamed

**Tuesday 19 May**

8:30 a.m. Mass Live Streamed

**Wednesday 20 May**

8:30 a.m. Mass Live Streamed

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Vespers / Benediction on Vigil of the Original Ascension Thursday

6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. quiet reflection of Exposed Eucharist

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Ascension Vespers & Benediction

**Thursday 21 May (Ascension Thursday old calendar) Thur. 6<sup>th</sup> Week of Easter**

8:30 a.m. Mass Live Streamed

Pentecost Novena

**Friday 22 May**

8:30 a.m. Mass Live Streamed

7:00 p.m. Presentation on parish response to First Phase of Opening Up

**Saturday 23 May**

8:30 a.m. Mass Live Streamed

1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Confessions

5:00 p.m. Mass Live Streamed

**Sunday 24 May Feast of the Ascension of the Lord**

8:30 a.m. Public Mass

11.30 a.m. Public Mass

**Monday 25 May Memorial Day**



## **PENTECOST NOVENA**

This particular novena is based on the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and a desire for sainthood. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that someone can become a Saint. We cannot save ourselves and it is only by the grace of God that we are saved. So, we must rely completely on the power of the Holy Spirit and the death of Our Lord Jesus. That is the essence of this novena. The Pentecost novena is really THE original novena. The disciples waited in unity and prayer for the Holy Spirit for nine days after Jesus' ascension to heaven. Jesus asked them to pray constantly in the upper room until the descent of the Holy Spirit. "They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers." – Acts 1:14

### **Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 1**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate. Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Your gift of Charity within us. The great charity of all the host of Saints is only made possible by your power, Oh Divine Spirit. Increase in me, the virtue of charity that I may love as God loves with the selflessness of the Saints. Amen.

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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 2**

Join in praying the Novena to the Holy Spirit Joy

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate. Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Your gift of Joy within us. All of the Saints are marked with an uncompromisable Joy in times of trial, difficulty and pain. Give us, Oh Holy Spirit, the Joy that surpasses all understanding that we may live as a witness to Your love and fidelity! Amen. 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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 3**

Join in praying the Novena to the Holy Spirit Peace

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate. Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Your gift of Peace within us. The Saints were tempted, attacked and accused by the devil who is the destroyer of peace. When we are accused by the devil, come to our aid as our Advocate and give us Peace that lasts through all trials! Amen.

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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 4**

Join in praying the Novena to the Holy Spirit Patience

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate. Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Your gift of Patience within us. Oh Holy Spirit, you give lavishly to those who ask.

Please give us the patience of the Saints who are now with you in heaven. Help us to endure everything with an eternal patience that is only possible with your help. Amen.

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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 5**

Join in praying the Novena to the Holy Spirit Kindness

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate. Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Your gift of Kindness within us. Jesus approached sinners with immense kindness. Holy Paraclete, please treat us humble sinners with the same kindness and give us the ability to treat all others with that kindness as well. Amen. 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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 6**

Join in praying the Novena to the Holy Spirit Faithfulness

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate. Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Your gift of Faithfulness within us. You, oh Lord, are ever faithful. You are faithful until the end. Though we are weak and distracted, please give us the grace to be faithful to You as you are to us! Amen.

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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 7**

Join in praying the Novena to the Holy Spirit Gentleness

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate. Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Your gift of Gentleness within us. Despite the gravity of our sins, oh Lord you treat us with Gentleness. Dear Holy Spirit, give us your power to treat all in our lives with the Gentleness of the Saints. Amen.

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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 8**

Join in praying the Novena to the Holy Spirit Self-Control

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate. Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Your gift of Self-Control within us. Your Martyrs had the overwhelming self-control to go joyfully to a painful death without shrinking from the opportunity to join You in heaven. Give us this self-control to have command over our emotions and desires that we may serve You more fully. Amen.

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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 9**

Join in praying the Novena to the Holy Spirit Goodness

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us bow down in humility at the power and grandeur of the Holy Spirit. Let us worship the Holy Trinity and give glory today to the Paraclete, our Advocate. Oh Holy Spirit, by Your power, Christ was raised from the dead to save us all. By Your grace, miracles are performed in Jesus' name. By Your love, we are protected from evil. And so, we ask with humility and a beggar's heart for Goodness within us. We want to be like your Saints in heaven. Holy Spirit, renew us by your power with your Goodness that we may bring the Good News to the world. Amen.

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. O, God,

who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.