

5th Sunday of Easter Bulletin for St. Ambrose Parish

May 17th, 2020



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BEWARE:

If you receive a text or email from Fr. Henry Smolenaars asking for financial aid or a favor please disregard as it is someone trying to scam you. The email address is not the one stated above and if he changes it, he will post it in this bulletin and on our web site.

OFFICE CLOSED: The office will be closed Friday May 15th and Monday May 18th. We will reopen on Tuesday May 19th at the usual time. Please note that the office door is locked so if assistance is needed please knock on the door and we'll be happy to serve you.

LIVE MASS WITH FR. HENRY: I (Fr. Henry) do a live mass every Wednesday and Sunday at 9:00 am (unless there are technical difficulties and then it will be put on after it has been recorded.). The next live mass is this Sunday, streamed live from St. Ambrose Church. If you want to watch, go to our web site at www.stambroseymouth.ca or go to my YouTube channel www.youtube.com/channel/UC1CwQV-c8xpu57fbCsu0fLg/videos?view=57&flow=grid

(Copy and paste this link into your web browser if you would like to follow along.)

Wondering what to do with your time while being isolated? Want to get connected with other people from our parish? Why not join an online group?



There is a 14-session series on the Holy Spirit that people can get involved in at St. Ambrose. The goal would be to finish by Pentecost which as you know is 50 days from Easter Sunday. How it works is you watch the video just before your group meets online, then the 4 or 5 of you will join in for a meeting together with questions you can discuss together. There can also be some sharing time about

how things are going. Click on the link to watch an ad for the series.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyhpK-X-onM&list=PLE6t-PqUvPEemanegIWYbKUn4j8olfe9h

If you want to be a part of a group, please email us Stambrosemail@gmail.com

-Fr. Henry



QUOTE OF THE WEEK: We need to find God, and God cannot be found in noise and restlessness. The more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life. -St Teresa of Calcutta

SUPPORTING YOUR PARISH FINANCIALLY: During this difficult time, I ask that you continue to support our Parish financially. If you want you can drop donations off at the office during office hours. Please knock on the door to be served. We now have **EMAIL TRANSFERS SET UP**, send to stambrosemail@gmail.com please add your envelope number in the message box if you have one or a mailing address for an income tax receipt. We still have an account on line to which you can donate to. Simply go to <http://www.stambroseyarmouth.ca/> and scroll down the page to the donate button in red and follow the directions.

DECREE OF NULLITY: "The Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth invites people with questions or concerns about the application for nullity process to contact the Marriage Tribunal Office. The office is open and ready to assist anyone who seeks additional information or guidance in how to begin the process. We can be reached by phone at 902-429-9800 ext. 321 or please visit the "Marriage Tribunal" on the Archdiocesan website www.halifaxyarmouth.org under "Pastoral Services".



Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of John "Allan" Boudreau. Eternal rest grant unto him
O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him.

REFLECTION: The Coming of the Spirit of Truth

Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year A

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept..." [John 14:15-17](#)

On this, the Sixth Sunday of Easter, we begin to turn our eyes toward the coming of the Holy Spirit. In this passage above, Jesus speaks of asking the Father to send another Advocate to be with us always. This Advocate is the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly, Jesus uses the title, "Spirit of Truth" to refer to the Holy Spirit. He also points out that the world cannot accept the Holy Spirit.

We are currently living in what we may call the "Age of the Holy Spirit." This is the age that Jesus spoke about with His Apostles. Therefore, it's good to look at the coming of the Holy Spirit in the way Jesus revealed it.

First, regarding the title, "Spirit of Truth," we should ponder whether we are able and willing to accept the full Truth that comes with receiving the Holy Spirit. If we are of the world, embracing worldly ideas and values, then we will not be able to accept the Holy Spirit. However, if we are able to see the errors of our world and the many false values within it, we will more easily be able to reject those values and embrace the Holy Spirit and the many truths that the Spirit reveals.

Furthermore, if we are open to the coming of the Holy Spirit, we will receive the greatest Advocate we can have in life. The Holy Spirit is THE Advocate, meaning, the only helper we need. Becoming consumed by the Holy Spirit provides us with every grace necessary in life.

Reflect, today, upon the fact that Jesus' promise to His Apostles has been fulfilled and that you have the ability to receive that promise here and now in your life. Say a prayer to the Holy Spirit and anticipate celebrating Pentecost Sunday in two weeks.

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. Jesus, I trust in You.

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.” [John 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.” [John 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." [John 16:12-13](#)

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.” [John 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.

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.” [John 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." [John 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.