

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THEME: **I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU AS ORPHANS**

From Easter to Pentecost, our readings focus on the early evangelizing mission of the apostles and on the promises of Jesus to his disciples, especially his promise of the Holy Spirit. Today's readings, explain who the Holy Spirit is, what his roles are and how we can experience him in our daily lives.

Our first reading describes how the Holy Spirit helped the apostle Philip, to preach powerfully and convert the Samaritans in large numbers. It also explains how the baptized Samaritans received the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit, through the imposition of hands by the apostles Peter and John. St Peter in the second reading explains how the Holy Spirit will help Christians to practice self-control, to defend their beliefs with gentleness and reverence, and to lead Faith-filled and God-fearing lives, during opposition and persecution.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus promised his disciples, we inclusive that he will not leave us as orphans, that he will ask God our Father, to send us another Advocate to be with us always. Jesus' continued presence in us and in the Church, through the Holy Spirit gives meaning and purpose to all we are and all we do in his name. As the Divine Advocate, the Holy Spirit will enlighten our minds, to receive deeper knowledge of our Faith.

In addition, the Divine Advocate will empower us, to defend our Faith powerfully and guide us properly in the practice of true Christian love. The Holy Spirit will also help us to recognize Jesus in the poor, in the sick, in the homeless, in the marginalized, in the outcast, in the drug addicts and even in the criminals, so that, we can become agents of healing and reconciliation, in a broken and divided world.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to be open to the Holy Spirit and prepare ourselves to receive him anew, as we prepare to celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost. The purpose of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us, is to help us grow towards maturity and holiness. We all have faults that prevent our growth: blocks of sin and imperfection, blocks due to childhood conflicts, blocks due to deeply ingrained personality traits and habits, blocks caused by addictions, and blocks resulting from bad choices we have made.

God, the Holy Spirit, helps us to see the truth about ourselves, and to discern the obstacles that inhibit our growth and holiness. As the Good Counselor the Holy Spirit also comes to our aid and gives us the strength to make difficult and painful decisions. God's Spirit actually lives in us, and we hear his voice, counseling and guiding us in the way of truth. Let us open the ears of our minds to hear him and to obey his promptings.

Remember nobody truly says Jesus is Lord, unless he or she is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.