

He will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth

6th Sunday of Easter – Year A

ACTS 8:5-8, 14-17 , PS 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20, 1 PT 3:15-18, JN 14:15-21



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Good morning/evening. It is good to be with you on this 6th Sunday of Easter.

In today's gospel Jesus tells us, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth." John 14:16

Several weeks ago, I returned my absentee ballot for the May election to our county clerk's office downtown. As I was leaving, I recalled Renata and I picking up our marriage license there some years ago. It was autumn then and the city work crews had gathered huge piles of leaves in Bronson Park across the street. I do not recall who threw the first handful of leaves. In our exuberance and playfulness, we tried to outdo one another. We ended in an embrace that has lasted 40 some years. Looking back, we were young and trusted in something beyond ourselves. There was a Truth to what we shared. Jesus tells us, 'Whoever observes my commandment to love, loves me and I will reveal myself to them.' Through marriage and the grace of our years, we come to know the Advocate of our love.

I recently met a man in the hospital that started our conversation by saying that he did not believe in God. As a child, he was taught that God did not exist. He was instructed that actions in this world have consequences and that he should strive to leave it a better place. He shared with me that he was an attorney working primarily with children who had no one to speak for them in the court system. Through his work, he demonstrated his care for the marginalized. "Whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters, you have done for me." Matt 25:40 How will we know a Christian? We know them by their works. This man, who did not believe in God, was closer to God than he knew. The Spirit of Truth invites all peoples to draw closer and recognize their Creator.

In what is becoming a tradition, Pope Francis on Holy Thursday went to a penitentiary and washed the feet of twelve men and women, Christian and Muslim alike. Pope Francis washed the feet of these forgotten not because of their faith, or, in spite of their faith. He washed their feet but because they are part of our human family. The Spirit of Truth guides us along the way, sharing the insight and wisdom to treat all peoples with respect and dignity.

Our news media is too often touched with stories of violence in our world. Would there be these conflicts if we regarded each other as part of the human family? Lacking tolerance, we look to what divides: race, religion, culture, and too readily conclude, ‘You are different and therefore a threat.’ The Spirit of Truth reminds us that we are one human family called to love one another.

This October there will be a community event at Wings Stadium called Kalamazoo is United. This event will be a gathering of Catholic and Protestant denominations to mark the 500 years since the Reformation. We will gather as community, to celebrate, not what divides us, but what we share in common. Guided by the Spirit of Truth, we will gather, acknowledging that we are one human family, pilgrims on a journey, seeking the face of God.

We come to know the Advocate’s embrace in the awe of each sunrise and the wonder of each sunset. We hear the Sacred Presence in the morning birdsong and the cry of a newborn. Jesus tells us that he will be with the human family, guiding and calling us to love one another. “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.” John 14:18

My good friend, Monsignor Fitzgerald once wrote, ‘Ultimately, it comes down to you and *me*, how we look at other people, how we smile and return smiles, how we treasure our faith and cherish the sacrament of God with us.’

Eucharist is our celebration of God with us. May Jesus open our hearts and minds to His presence as our Advocate for tolerance and peace. May His Resurrection be realized in our day and time by the love and compassion that we share with the world.

He is Risen! Alleluia!

Works Cited

All scripture quotations are taken from;. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

As always, I welcome your questions and comments. My email is fsila@sttomskazoo.org.