

Sunday, May 10, 2026 – Sixth Sunday of Easter Year A

First Reading - Acts of the Apostles 8:5-8. 14-17

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. As a result there was great rejoicing in that town.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Responsorial Psalm - Ps 65:1-7. 16. 20. R. see v.1

(R.) Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

or

(R.) Alleluia!

Second Reading - 1 Peter 3:15-18

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

Gospel Acclamation - John 14:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

All who love me will keep my words,

and my Father will love them and we will come to them.

Alleluia!

Gospel - John 14:15-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate.

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘If you love me you will keep my commandments.

I shall ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate

to be with you for ever,

that Spirit of truth

whom the world can never receive

since it neither sees nor knows him;

but you know him,

because he is with you, he is in you.

I will not leave you orphans;

I will come back to you.

In a short time the world will no longer see me;

but you will see me,

because I live and you will live.

On that day

you will understand that I am in my Father

and you in me and I in you.

Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them

will be one who loves me;

and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father,

and I shall love him and show myself to him.’

We are Never on our Own
Reflection on the Gospel - Easter 6A
(John 14:15-21)
Veronica Lawson RSM

Those who defend themselves in court run the risk of being outsmarted by clever and sometimes unscrupulous adversaries. It is never a good idea to be too self-reliant even in a country with a basically sound legal system such as ours. Today’s gospel implies that the disciples need a defense attorney or lawyer. Jesus has acted in that capacity for them in their struggles with the anti-gospel forces arrayed against them.

Now he is close to death and he gives them instructions that begin and end with reference to loving him and keeping his commandments. Jesus has given them a new commandment, namely that they love one another: “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (13:34). Later in this discourse (15:12-14) the reader of the gospel learns what the actors in the drama already know about Jesus’ commandments. “This is my commandment,” says Jesus, “that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.” This is no small command, to be prepared to die for one another.

Given the opposition they are likely to face, the disciples cannot live out such a commitment on their own. Neither is Jesus leaving them “orphans” who have to fend for themselves. He will ask his “Father” to provide “another” defender or advocate who will act on their behalf, an advocate who will always be there. This new advocate is the “Spirit of truth”. As we approach the end of the Easter season, the liturgy thus points us towards Pentecost and the gift of God’s Spirit.

It is good to know we are never on our own. It is also good to reflect on the capacity we have to make the love of Christ present in our world. Many of us will never find ourselves in a situation where our love is tested to the point that we have to give life for others. During the COVID crisis that ushered in the present decade, we did not have to look far to find countless people who gave their lives for others. Health professionals, cleaners, truck drivers, flight attendants, shop assistants, school teachers, lecturers, ordinary people everywhere lay down their lives for the sake of others. The gospel calls us to put the well-being of others, even their survival, before our own comfort. With life-style changes and movement of peoples precipitated by war and by the climate crisis, we find ourselves called to “lay down our lives” for the sake of our friends, humankind and other-kind, across the planet. The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) is one powerful interfaith-based avenue for action. We can, despite opposition, continue to advocate together for climate action and for those displaced by rising sea levels, by war or by persecution. With the help of the Spirit, our Advocate, we can surely rise to the challenge.