



Church of the Holy Family
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Message for the 7th Sunday of Easter, Year A, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Holy Family Church

The Thursday just passed was Ascension Thursday where the Church celebrated the Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Risen Lord Jesus Christ and next Sunday, we shall celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost. Thus, we commemorating the first ever Novena (9-day prayer period) held by the Church between the Ascension and the Pentecost. It was a period of preparation to welcome the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the infant Church and each of her pioneer members including Mother Mary (Act 1: 14) as mentioned in the First Reading.

They were together in intensive prayer as instructed by Our Lord. So too must we, for 3 main reasons. (1) To thank God for the great feast of Pentecost where we reminded that we need very much the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit in our life, our families, our schools, our work places, our communities, and our country. (2) To thank God for the fruitful passage through this Circuit Breaker Measures and the precious time and respite that allow us to take stock of many other aspects of our life which otherwise would have been brushed aside due to our tight schedule. (3) To intercede to the Holy Spirit for special gifts that we need so as to make this Transition safe, useful and helpful and without U-turn so that we can be well prepared and equipped for what is to come.

There may be permanent changes in our lives. For some of us, minor tweaks in the way we do things but for some, drastic changes may be unavoidable. The Apostles also experienced that when Jesus ascended to heaven but they know that the Spirit of Jesus is with them as they go about telling the world of God's mercy and love courageously as assured by the 2nd Reading, 'the Spirit of God resting on you' (1 Pt 4:14).

In the Gospel text (Jn 17:1-11) just He was poised to proceed to the definitive phase of his Paschal Sacrifice, he gave an executive summary of His works in the form of a prayer to His Father and our Father. He would not be leaving behind any material items or wealth to anyone but only 'the teaching you [the Father] gave to me' (Jn 17:8) and 'pray for those you [the Father] have given me' (Jn 17:9) giving 'eternal life to all those you [the Father] have entrusted to him [Jesus Christ] (Jn 17:2).

Though Jesus has ascended into heaven, yet He 'want those you [the Father] has given me to be with me where I am' (Jn 17:24). We too want to be with Jesus and the Responsorial Psalm declares our longing to live with God forever, 'to live in the House of the Lord, all the days of my life' (Ps 26:4). In Preface I of the Ascension of the Lord to the

Eucharistic Prayer, we have 'He ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state but that we, His members, might be confident of following where He, our Head and Founder, has gone before.' We trust the Holy Spirit to help us stay the course to our heavenly homeland.

Today, while we commemorate the feast day of St Joanna, wife of Chuza (Lk 8:3) and St Vincent of Lerins, it is also the World Day of Prayer for the Church in China. We also to our Mother, 'Our Lady, Help of Christians'. 25th May is the feast day of Pope St Gregory VII, St Bede the Venerable and St Mary Magdalene de Pazzi. 26th May is the feast day of St Philip Neri while 27th May is that of St Augustine of Canterbury. 28th May is the feast day of St Justus and 29th May is the feast day of Pope St Paul VI. 30th May is the feast day of Pope St Felix I and St Joan of Arc who was canonized in 1920 and made Patroness of France.

From the Nicene Creed, let us truly believe what we recite, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.' Alleluia

Fr Stanislaus PANG