

May 14, 2023
Cycle A – 6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

Psalm: 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20

1 Peter 3:15-18

John 14:15-21

Notes from Bishop Peter

THEME: The Holy Spirit guides the church
to see Jesus' will in the complexities of life.

1. Jesus opens his heart to his disciples during the Last Supper. He says he must go from them in order to suffer and die. We believe that because of his obedience and self-sacrificing love, his Father will raise him from the dead. Then he will stay with them for a while before being taken up to heaven. (Cf. [John 14: 15-21](#))
2. He will not leave them orphans. His Father will send the Holy Spirit through Jesus. The Spirit's power and presence will shape the church and all Christian communities such as our parishes. He will permeate the hearts of all believers, making us like Jesus, capable of seeing life through his eyes and living like him.
3. One of the ways the Spirit directs the church is to help us see and learn from what are called the signs of the times. This means that the church should listen to and learn from the world to be able to preach the Gospel more effectively. Jesus himself used this phrase as we see in both [Matthew 16:3](#) and [Luke 12:56](#) where he criticizes the Pharisees and Sadducees for their failure to do so.
4. One of the most evident sign of our times is the coronavirus and its impact it continues to make on the world. Thankfully, the World Health Organization announced recently that it no longer qualifies as a global emergency even though thousands of people are still dying from the virus every week, and millions of others are suffering from debilitating, long-term effects.
5. The pandemic and the toll it has taken on millions of people should help us realize that the exorbitant spending on nuclear arms and other armaments is not in keeping with the times. Conventional weapons or submarines or fighter jets didn't bring the world to a standstill. How then can we protect and enhance human beings while using resources wisely, so as to prepare ourselves for whatever may come next? One area that needs serious examination is the elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide, weapons that are not only costly but dangerous, for instance should they fall into the hands

of terrorists. The importance of eliminating these weapons worldwide takes on greater importance now that Vladimir Putin has threatened to use them in the war against Ukraine.

- a. In this context Pope Francis, moved by the Holy Spirit, on November 23rd of 2019, while visiting Nagasaki in Japan reflected on the atomic bombing that took place on August 6, 1945. He said, "Peace and international stability are incompatible with attempts to build upon the fear of mutual destruction, or the threat of total annihilation. In a world where millions of children and families live in inhumane conditions, the money that is squandered and the fortunes made through the manufacture, upgrading, maintenance and sale of ever more destructive weapons are an affront crying out to heaven. Convinced as I am that a world without nuclear weapons is possible and necessary, I ask political leaders to realize that these weapons cannot protect us from current threats to national and international security." Case in point: The Coronavirus.
6. Another sign of the times we saw during the height of the pandemic was the dedication of so many health care workers who put their own lives at risk to serve sick people. Also, today we thank our mothers for their inspiring and self-sacrificing love. We owe them so much.
- a. People like them are obviously moved by the Holy Spirit to respond to the generous love of Jesus. As Saint Paul wrote, "Jesus died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." ([2 Corinthians, 5:15](#))
 - b. In so doing, they avoided the trap of selfishness and egotism that would make themselves the center of the world. These unfortunate people often end up miserable and make life difficult for those around them. Those who make Jesus and the service of others their focal point, however, are joyful, patient and inspire those around them.
 - c. Now, we come to our Eucharist: It is Jesus who continually guides the church and each of us to work for the Kingdom of God and it is Jesus who helps us to live, not for ourselves but for him who died for us and was raised again.

Amen.